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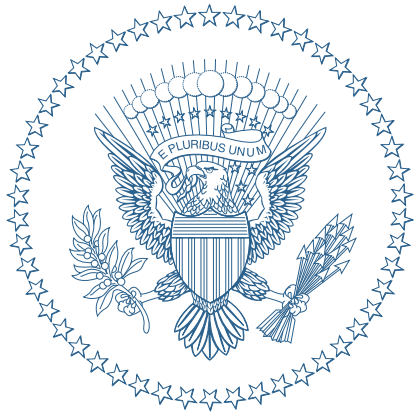
OF THE
UNITED STATES

Barack Obama



2014

(IN TWO BOOKS)

BOOK II—JULY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

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Foreword

As 2014 came to a close, there was no doubt it was a year of action.

Our recovery from the Great Recession accelerated as businesses added nearly three million jobs and the unemployment rate fell at the fastest pace in three decades. In fact, over a 4 year stretch, America had put more people back to work than all other major advanced economies combined. The successful rescue of the auto industry officially came to an end, with American taxpayers paid back in full for what my Administration had invested. And thanks to the Affordable Care Act, we saw the largest gains in health coverage in four decades, an uninsured rate approaching an all-time low, and the price of health care rising at its slowest rate in half a century—an achievement that had also helped us cut our deficits by roughly two-thirds since I took office.

It was also a year in which social justice issues were front and center. At the height of summer, protests spread in Ferguson, Missouri, sparking another national conversation on race relations in America. A subject of passionate debate, the situation in Ferguson illuminated broader challenges we face as a Nation, and in its wake, I established the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing and advocated for the expanded use of body cameras to help strengthen the trust between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. We took steps to reform the Department of Veterans Affairs, providing it new authorities to get veterans the health care they need when they need it. Across our country, in courthouses and statehouses, the rights of LGBT individuals were more widely recognized and affirmed—with same-sex couples gaining the right to marry in 19 additional States in 2014 alone. And because the Congress failed to act on bipartisan legislation, I announced a series of Executive actions to make our Nation's broken immigration system smarter, fairer, and more just.

To expand opportunity for people in every corner of our country, I signed bipartisan legislation to improve the quality of childcare and give some peace of mind to working parents. Building on that achievement, the White House hosted a Summit on Early Childhood Education to announce more than one billion dollars in Federal, private, and public sector resources for early education and for the launch of Invest in US, a private-public initiative that encourages investment in our youngest learners.

In a year when a Republican-led Congress too often refused to act on issues that mattered to American families, I did what I could on my own, taking more than 80 Executive actions to help grow the economy, create jobs, and strengthen the middle class. Over the final 6 months of 2014, I took action to prohibit Federal contractors from discriminating against LGBT employees, to keep our workplaces safe and fair, to protect a free and open internet, to spur innovation in high-tech manufacturing, and to deter corporations from moving their mailbox abroad just to avoid paying taxes in America. My Administration also launched "It's On Us," a collaborative public awareness and educational campaign led by Vice President Joe Biden to engage college students and campus communities to prevent sexual assault.

While welcome economic milestones were reached here at home, emerging crises abroad demanded strong American leadership. In a powerful example of what America does best, our country did more than any other to lead the international effort in West Africa to contain the spread of Ebola, a rare and deadly disease, sending some of our best people—our troops, scientists, health care workers, and public health professionals—to the front lines of the outbreak to help stop it at its source and save lives. And the United States built a global coalition in defense of our common security to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group ISIL.

2014 set yet another new record for global average temperatures, and America led global efforts to combat climate change. We proposed a Clean Power Plan to substantially cut carbon pollution from our power plants. We partnered with China to reduce global carbon emissions—the first time China had committed to limiting its emissions—and our partnership jumpstarted new progress in other countries. And I protected more of our lands and waters, bringing the amount of land conserved during my Administration to a total of 260 million acres by the end of 2014.

We also began to write a new chapter in our leadership in the Americas by turning a new page in our relationship with the Cuban people and by beginning to bury the last remnant of the Cold War in the Americas. And as the year drew to a close, our combat mission in Afghanistan did as well—and more of our brave troops spent the holidays at home than at any time in over a decade.

By the end of 2014, 6 years had passed since the economic crisis. Six years that demanded hard work and sacrifice on everyone's part. But as a country, we have every right to be proud of what we had to show for it. More jobs. More insured citizens. A growing economy. Shrinking deficits. Bustling industry. Booming energy. For all the challenges we faced in 2014, you could pick any metric you wanted—America's resurgence was real, and our leadership was as vital as ever.

My Presidency is about to enter its fourth quarter. And I am as determined as ever to keep doing everything in my power to make life better for the American people. Because thanks to their efforts, a new foundation has been laid. A new future is ready to be written. Together, we have set the stage for a new American moment, and I am going to spend every minute of my final 2 years in office making sure we seize it.

Preface

This book contains the papers and speeches of the President of the United States that were issued by the Office of the Press Secretary during the period July 1–December 31, 2014. The material has been compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration.

The material is presented in chronological order, and the dates shown in the headings are the dates of the documents or events. In instances when the release date differs from the date of the document itself, that fact is shown in the textnote. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy: Remarks are checked against an audio recording, and signed documents are checked against the original. Textnotes and cross references have been provided by the editors for purposes of identification or clarity. Speeches were delivered in Washington, DC, unless otherwise indicated. The times noted are local times. All materials that are printed in full text in the book have been indexed in the subject and name indexes and listed in the document categories list.

The Public Papers of the Presidents series was begun in 1957 in response to a recommendation of the National Historical Publications Commission. An extensive compilation of messages and papers of the Presidents covering the period 1789 to 1897 was assembled by James D. Richardson and published under congressional authority between 1896 and 1899. Since then, various private compilations have been issued, but there was no uniform publication comparable to the Congressional Record or the United States Supreme Court Reports. Many Presidential papers could be found only in the form of mimeographed White House releases or as reported in the press. The Commission therefore recommended the establishment of an official series in which Presidential writings, addresses, and remarks of a public nature could be made available.

The Commission's recommendation was incorporated in regulations of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, issued under section 6 of the Federal Register Act (44 U.S.C. 1506), which may be found in title 1, part 10, of the Code of Federal Regulations.

A companion publication to the Public Papers series, the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, was begun in 1965 to provide a broader range of Presidential materials on a more timely basis to meet the needs of the contemporary reader. Beginning with the administration of Jimmy Carter, the Public Papers series expanded its coverage to include additional material as printed in the Weekly Compilation. On January 20, 2009, the printed Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents was superseded by the online Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents. The Daily Compilation provides a listing of the President's daily schedule and meetings, when announced, and other items of general interest issued by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Also included in the printed edition are lists of the President's nominations submitted to the Senate, materials released by the Office of the Press Secretary that are not printed in full text in the book, and proclamations, Executive orders, and other Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the *Federal Register*. This information appears in the appendixes at the end of the book.

Volumes covering the administrations of Presidents Herbert Hoover, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, William J. Clinton, and George W. Bush are also included in the Public Papers series.

The Public Papers of the Presidents publication program is under the direction of John Hyrum Martinez, Director of the Publications and Services Division, Office of the Federal

Register. The series is produced by the Presidential and Legislative Publications Unit. The Chief Editor of this book was Joseph K. Vetter; the Managing Editor was Joshua H. Liberatore, assisted by Amelia E. Otovo.

The frontispiece and photographs used in the portfolio were supplied by the White House Photo Office. The typography and design of the book were developed by the Government Publishing Office under the direction of John Crawford, Acting Deputy Director and Managing Director of Plant Operations.

Oliver A. Potts
Director of the Federal Register

David S. Ferriero
Archivist of the United States

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Secretary of the Interior	Sarah M.R. "Sally" Jewell
Secretary of Agriculture	Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Commerce	Penny S. Pritzker
Secretary of Labor	Thomas E. Perez
Secretary of Health and Human Services	Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development	Shaun L.S. Donovan (resigned July 9) Julián Castro (confirmed July 9)
Secretary of Transportation	Anthony R. Foxx
Secretary of Energy	Ernest J. Moniz
Secretary of Education	Arne Duncan
Secretary of Veterans Affairs	Robert A. McDonald (confirmed July 29)
Secretary of Homeland Security	Jeh C. Johnson
Chief of Staff	Denis R. McDonough
Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency	Regina McCarthy
United States Trade Representative	Michael B. Froman

Director of the Office of Management and Budget	Shaun L.S. Donovan (confirmed July 10)
Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers	Jason L. Furman
United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations	Samantha Power
Administrator of the Small Business Administration	Maria Contreras-Sweet

Administration of Barack Obama

2014

Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting
July 1, 2014

I thought I'd get the Cabinet together this morning because we all know that America will be busy this afternoon. Go Team U.S.A. [*Laughter*]

About the halfway point through this year, we can look back and see some enormous progress that we've been able to make on the economy. We continue to create jobs, over 9.4 million created over the last several years. We're continuing to see improvement in the housing market. We're continuing to see real progress in terms of the energy sector. But what we also know is, is that there's so much more that's possible.

And part of the reason that I wanted to bring the Cabinet together today is to underscore for them my belief—I think, shared by most Americans—that we can't wait for Congress to actually get going on issues that are vital to the middle class.

We've already seen the power of some of our executive actions in making a real difference for ordinary families, whether it's on minimum wage for Federal workers—or for workers who are with Federal contractors, equal pay, the terrific work that's being done around climate change so we're transitioning to a clean-energy economy.

But what I'm going to be urging all of you to do, and what I'm going to be continually pushing throughout this year and for the next couple of years, is that if Congress can't act on core issues that would actually make a difference in helping middle class families get ahead, then we're going to have to be creative about how we can make real progress.

Keep in mind that my preference is always going to be to work with Congress and to actually get legislation done. That's how we get some more permanent fixes. And as I mentioned yesterday with respect to immigration, whatever we do administratively is not going to be sufficient to solve a broken immigration system.

The same is true when it comes to infrastructure. We'll be talking a little bit about how we need to renew the highway trust fund. But more importantly, we could potentially put people to work all across the country, rebuilding roads and bridges, putting construction workers back to work. That could boost our economy enormously. And now is the time to do it, but that requires congressional action.

And so we're always going to prefer working on a bipartisan basis to get things done. That's what folks expect out of Washington. They're not looking for excuses, and they're not looking for a lot of partisan sniping. But if Congress is unable to do it, then all of our Cabinet members here head up big agencies that touch people's lives in all sorts of ways, and I'm going to be continually looking for ways in which we can show some real progress.

And the second topic that we're going to be spending a lot of time talking about is how do we continue to improve the functioning of Government to make it more customer friendly. This is something that we've been working on since Sylvia was head of OMB. And this is something that Shaun will be prioritizing. I expect every agency to look and see, how can we get more bang for the buck in the agencies that we operate? And I know that many of you can report some significant progress in reducing paperwork and bureaucracy and redtape for projects and initiatives around the country in education, in energy, in housing, and in transportation. But I think we can do even better.

So I'm looking forward to getting a report from you on the progress that has been made. And hopefully, we can share some ideas to see if we can make even more progress.

The bottom line is this: I went to Minnesota—many of the press here accompanied me—and had a wonderful conversation with folks around the country who are doing their jobs every single day, raising families, working hard, contributing to their communities. And their

hopes and aspirations are my primary focus and should be the primary focus of this town. They are extraordinarily cynical about Washington right now, and rightfully so. They just don't see any capacity by Congress to do anything. And we've seen a Congress that said no to increasing the minimum wage, said no to immigration reform, has said no to equal pay legislation. The only thing they seem to say yes to, the Republicans in the House at least, is more tax breaks for folks at the top. And as a consequence, the people who sent us here, they just don't feel as if anybody is fighting for them and working for them.

We're not always going to be able to get things through Congress, at least this Congress, the way we'd want to. But we sure as heck can make sure that the folks back home know that we're pushing their agenda and that we're working hard on their behalf and we're doing every single thing we can do to make a difference in their lives. So I want to make sure that we emphasize not what we can't do, but what we can do, in the coming months.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sylvia Mathews Burwell, former Director, and Shaun L.S. Donovan, Director-designate, Office of Management and Budget.

Remarks at Georgetown Waterfront Park
July 1, 2014

Well, hello, everybody. Have a seat, have a seat. It's hot. [*Laughter*] It's hot out. Anthony, take off your coat, man. [*Laughter*] It is hot, and Team U.S.A. takes the pitch in a couple hours, so we've got to get down to business. We don't have time for a lot of small talk. Am I right, Mr. Mayor? We've got to get going.

Behind me is one of the busiest bridges in Washington. And with the Fourth of July on Friday—also Malia's birthday, for those of you who are interested; she will be 16; it's a little worrisome—I would note that this bridge is named for the man who wrote "The Star-Spangled Banner," Francis Scott Key.

Three years ago, I came here to this very spot, to the Key Bridge, to talk about how two of the five major bridges connecting DC to Virginia—including this one—were rated "structurally deficient." And with almost 120,000 vehicles crossing these bridges every day, I said it was important to fix them.

And today, that's exactly what we're doing. So, soon, construction workers will be on the job making the Key Bridge safer for commuters and for families and even for Members of Congress to cross. [*Laughter*] This is made possible by something called the highway trust fund, which Congress established back in the 1950s and which helps States repair and rebuild our infrastructure all across the country. It's an example of what can happen when Washington just functions the way it was supposed to.

Back then, you had Eisenhower, a Republican President; over time, you would have Democratic Presidents, Democratic and Republican Members of Congress all recognizing, building bridges and roads and levees and ports and airports—that none of that is a partisan issue. That's making sure that America continues to progress.

Now, here is the problem. Here is the reason we're here in the heat. If this Congress does not act by the end of the summer, the highway trust fund will run out. Won't be any money there. All told, nearly 700,000 jobs could be at risk next year. That would be like Congress threatening to lay off the entire population of Denver or Seattle or Boston. That's a lot of people. It would be a bad idea. Right now there are more than a hundred thousand active projects across the country where workers are paving roads and rebuilding bridges and modernizing our transit systems. And soon, States may have to choose which projects to continue and which ones to put the brakes on because they're running out of money. Some have already done just that, just because

they're worried that Congress will not get its act together in time.

Now, earlier this year, I put forward a plan not just to replenish the highway trust fund, I put forward a plan to rebuild our transportation infrastructure across the country in a responsible way. And I want to thank Secretary Anthony Foxx, who is here today, for his hard work in putting this plan together. Because we are not spending enough on the things that help our economy grow, the things that help businesses move products, the thing that help workers get to the job, the things that help families get home to see their loved ones at night. We spend significantly less as a portion of our economy than China does, than Germany does, than just about every other advanced country. They know something that I guess we don't, which is, that's the path to growth, that's the path to competitiveness.

So the plan we put together would support millions of jobs. It would give cities and States and private investors the certainty they need to plan ahead. It would help small businesses ship their goods faster, help parents get home to their kids faster. And it wouldn't add to the deficits, because we'd pay for it in part by closing tax loopholes for companies that are shipping their profits overseas to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. Seems like a sensible thing to do.

It's not crazy, it's not socialism. [*Laughter*] It's not the imperial Presidency or—[*laughter*]. No laws are broken. We're just building roads and bridges like we've been doing for the last, I don't know, 50, 100 years. But so far, House Republicans have refused to act on this idea. I haven't heard a good reason why they haven't acted. It's not like they've been busy with other stuff. [*Laughter*] No, seriously. [*Laughter*] I mean, they're not doing anything. Why don't they do this?

Now, Republican obstruction is not just some abstract political stunt, it has real and direct consequences for middle class families all across the country.

We went through the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, we've climbed back. Since then, we've created 9.4 million new jobs over the past 51 months. Corporate profits are up, stock market is up, housing is improving. Unemployment is down. The deficits have been cut in half. We're making progress, but we still have a situation where those at the top are doing as well as ever, but middle class families all across the country are still struggling to get by. There are people who are working hard, they believe in the American Dream; it feels sometimes like the system is rigged against them.

And they have good reason to think that way. So far this year, Republicans in Congress have blocked or voted down every serious idea to strengthen the middle class. Not ideas that are unique to me—they're not. This isn't Obama bridge. [*Laughter*] It's Key's Bridge. But the Republicans have said no to raising the minimum wage, they've said no to fair pay, they've said no to extending unemployment insurance for over 3 million Americans looking for a new job.

And this obstruction keeps the system rigged for those who are doing fine at the very top. It prevents us from helping more middle class families. And as long as they insist on taking no action whatsoever that will help anybody, I'm going to keep on taking actions on my own that can help the middle class, like the actions I've already taken to speed up construction projects and attract new manufacturing jobs and lift workers' wages and help students pay off their student loans.

And they criticized me for this. Boehner sued me for this. [*Laughter*] And I told him, I'd rather do things with you, pass some laws, make sure the highway trust fund is funded so we don't lay off hundreds of thousands of workers. It's not that hard. Middle class families can't wait for Republicans in Congress to do stuff. So sue me. [*Laughter*] As long as they're doing nothing, I'm not going to apologize for trying to do something.

And look, I just want to be clear, Republicans in Congress, they're patriots, they love their country, they love their families. They just have a flawed theory of the economy that they can't seem to get past. They believe that all we should be doing is giving more tax

breaks to those at the top, eliminating regulations that stop big banks or polluters from doing what they want, cut the safety net from people trying to work their way into the middle class, and then somehow the economy is going to get stronger, and jobs and prosperity trickle down to everybody. That's their worldview. I'm sure they sincerely believe it. It's just not accurate. It does not work.

We know from our history our economy doesn't grow from the top down, it grows from the middle out. We do better when you've got some construction workers on the job. They then go to a restaurant, and they buy a new car. That means the workers there start doing better. Everybody does better. And we could be doing so much more if Republicans in Congress were less interested in stacking the deck in favor of those at the top or trying to score political points or purposely trying to gridlock Washington and just tried to get some things done to grow the economy for everybody. We could do so much more if we just rallied around an economic patriotism, a sense that our job is to get things done as one Nation and as one people.

Economic patriotism would say that instead of protecting corporations that are shipping jobs overseas, let's make sure they're paying their fair share of taxes, let's reward American workers and businesses that hire them. Let's put people to work rebuilding America. Let's invest in manufacturing so the next generation of good manufacturing jobs are right here, made in the U.S.A. That'd be something to celebrate on the Fourth of July.

Economic patriotism says that instead of stacking the deck in the favor of folks just at the top, let's harness the talents and ingenuity of every American and give every child access to quality education and make sure that if your job was stamped obsolete or shipped overseas, you're going to get retrained for an even better job.

Economic patriotism says that instead of making it tougher for middle class families to get ahead, let's reward hard work for every American. Let's make sure women earn pay that's equal to their efforts. Let's make sure families can make ends meet if their child gets sick and they need to take a day off. Let's make sure no American who works full time ever has to live in poverty.

Let's tell everybody they're worth something. No matter who you are, no matter what you look like, where you come from, who you love, if you work hard, if you're responsible, you can make it here in America. That's what this country was founded on, that idea. That's why I ran for this office.

I think sometimes about what we could be accomplishing, what we could have accomplished this past year, what we could have accomplished the year before that. And typically, what gets reported on is just the politics: "Well, you know, they're not doing this because they don't want to give Obama a victory," or "Oh, well, we don't want to do this right now because maybe the midterm election is coming up," and, "Oh, well, what's happening with the polls?" People don't care about that. People just want to see some results. And objectively, if you look at the agenda I'm putting forward, the things that we're trying to get done like just fixing bridges and roads, it really shouldn't be controversial. It hasn't been controversial in the past.

And so part of the reason that I'm going to be spending a lot of time over the next several weeks and months getting out there with ordinary folks is just to report to you, it's not as if I don't know that you could use some help. I know. It's not as if we don't have good plans to put more people back to work and raise their incomes and improve the quality of education. We know how to do it. That's not the reason it's not happening. It's not happening because of politics.

And the only folks that can fix that are going to be you, the American people and voters. We—sometimes in our culture right now, we just get cynical about stuff, and we just assume things can't change because nothing seems to change in this town. But that's not true. It can change, as long as everybody gets activated, as long as people still feel hopeful and we don't fall prey to cynicism.

And so I just want everybody here to understand that as frustrating as it may be sometimes, as stuck as Congress may be sometimes, if the American people put pressure on this town to actually get something done and everybody is looking at some commonsense agenda items that we should be able to do because Democrats and Republicans were able to do them in the past, we can grow our economy, we can lift people's incomes, we can make sure that people who are fighting hard can get into the middle class and stay there. But it's going to take you. It's going to take you. This is not going to happen on its own. And I'm confident, if that's what we do, if all of you are fighting alongside me every single day instead of just giving up on this place, then we're going to make America better than ever. That's a promise.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. Go Team U.S.A.! Let's build some bridges!

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Vincent C. Gray of the District of Columbia.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Digital Computer Exports
July 1, 2014

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1211(d) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 (Public Law 105–85), I hereby notify you of my decision to establish a new level for the notification procedure for digital computers set forth in section 1211(a) of Public Law 105–85. The new level will be 8.0 Weighted TeraFLOPS; the current level is 3.0 Weighted TeraFLOPS. The attached report provides the rationale supporting this decision and is in accordance with the requirements of Public Law 105–85, sections 1211(d) and (e).

I have made this change based on the recommendation of the Departments of State, Defense, Commerce, and Energy.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Carl M. Levin, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Timothy P. Johnson, chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, chairman, House Committee on Armed Services; and Edward R. Royce, chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Statement on the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
July 2, 2014

In 1964, President Johnson put pen to paper and signed the Civil Rights Act into law. Fifty years later, few pieces of legislation have defined our national identity as distinctly or as powerfully. By outlawing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, the Civil Rights Act effectively ended segregation in schools, workplaces, and public facilities. It opened the door for the Voting Rights Act and the Fair Housing Act. And it transformed the concepts of justice, equality, and democracy for generations to come.

The Civil Rights Act brought us closer to making real the declaration at the heart of our founding: that we are all created equal. But that journey continues. A half a century later, we're still working to tear down barriers and put opportunity within reach for every American, no matter who they are, what they look like, or where they come from. So, as we celebrate this anniversary and the undeniable progress we've

made over the past 50 years, we also remember those who have fought tirelessly to perfect our Union and recommit ourselves to making America more just, more equal, and more free.

Remarks at the 1776 Startup Hub
July 3, 2014

So the—we're going into Fourth of July weekend, and what more appropriate place to be than 1776. This is an incubator for all sorts of tech startups, a lot of them focused on social change issues, on education, on health care. And so we've got a range of entrepreneurs who are trying to figure out how can we do well by doing good, in many cases.

And I just have to say that the young people—and some not so young people that I spoke to—[*laughter*]—coming from a wide range of backgrounds—we had former Army Rangers, we had lawyers, we had former HR folks, transportation experts, engineers—all of them had the kinds of energy and drive and creativity and innovation that has been the hallmark of the American economy.

And part of the reason I wanted to come here today is to focus on what's happened in the U.S. economy over the last several months and last several years. We just got a jobs report today showing that we've now seen the fastest job growth in the United States in the first half of the year since 1999. [*Applause*] All right? So this is also the first time we've seen 5 consecutive months of job growth over 200,000 since 1999. And we've seen the quickest drop in unemployment in 30 years.

So it gives you a sense that the economy has built momentum, that we are making progress. We've now seen almost 10 million jobs created over the course of the last 52 months. And it should be a useful reminder to people all across the country that, given where we started back in 2008, we have made enormous strides, thanks to the incredible hard work of the American people and American businesses that have been out there competing, getting smarter, getting more effective. And it's making a difference all across the country.

Now, what we also know is, as much progress has been made, there are still folks out there who are struggling. We still have not seen as much increase in income and wages as we'd like to see. A lot of folks are still digging themselves out of challenges that arose out of the great recession.

Historically, financial crises take a longer time to recover from. We've done better than the vast majority of other countries over the last 5 years, but that drag has still meant a lot of hardship for a lot of folks. And so it's really important for us to understand that we could be making even stronger process, we could be growing even more jobs, we could be creating even more business opportunities for smart, talented folks like these if those of us here in Washington were focused on them, focused on you, the American people, rather than focused on politics.

And I've given a number of examples over the last several months of things we know would work. If we are investing in rebuilding our infrastructure, that doesn't just put construction workers back to work, that puts engineers back to work, that puts landscape architects back to work, it puts folks who are manufacturing concrete or steel back to work. It makes a difference, and it has huge ripple effects all across the economy.

If we are serious about increasing the minimum wage, that puts more money in the pockets of people who are most likely to spend it. They, in turn, are most likely to hire more people because they now have more customers who are frequenting their businesses. If we are making sure that there's equal pay for equal work, that's helping families all across the country. If we're focused on making sure that childcare is accessible and affordable and high quality, that frees up a whole bunch of potential entrepreneurs, as well as people who are just going to work every single day, doing the right thing, being responsible, but often are hampered by difficult situations in terms of trying to manage parenting and families.

And so there are just a series of specific things we can do right now, many of them I'm doing on my own because we have the administrative authority to do it, but some of them we can't do without Congress. We can't fix a broken immigration system that would allow incredibly talented folks who want to start businesses here and create jobs here in the United States, would allow them to stay and make those investments. That's something that we need Congress to help us on. We're not going to be able to fund the highway trust fund and to ramp up our investment in infrastructure without acts of Congress.

So my hope is, is the American people look at today's news and understand that, in fact, we are making strides. We have not seen more consistent job growth since the nineties. But we can make even more progress if Congress is willing to work with my administration and to set politics aside, at least occasionally—[*laughter*]—which I know is what the American people are urgently looking for.

It's a sort of economic patriotism to—where you say to yourself, how is it that we can start rebuilding this country to make sure that all of the young people who are here, but their kids and their grandkids, are going to be able to enjoy the same incredible opportunities that this country offers as we have? That's our job. That's what we should be focused on. And it's worth remembering as we go into Independence Day.

Thanks, everybody. Appreciate it. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m.

The President's Weekly Address
July 4, 2014

Hi, everybody. I hope you're enjoying your Fourth of July weekend.

I want to begin today by saying a special word to the U.S. Men's Soccer Team, who represented America so well the past few weeks. We are so proud of you. You've got a lot of new believers. And I know there's actually a petition on the White House website to make Tim Howard the next Secretary of Defense. Chuck Hagel's got that spot right now, but if there is a vacancy, I promise to think about it.

It was 238 years ago that our Founders came together in Philadelphia to launch our American experiment. There were farmers and businessmen, doctors and lawyers, ministers and a kite-flying scientist.

Those early patriots may have come from different backgrounds and different walks of life, but they were united by a belief in a simple truth: that we are all created equal, that we are all endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Over the years, that belief has sustained us through war and depression, peace and prosperity. It's helped us build the strongest democracy, the greatest middle class, and the most powerful military the world has ever known. And today, there isn't a nation on Earth that wouldn't gladly trade places with the United States of America.

But our success is only possible because we have never treated those self-evident truths as self-executing. Generations of Americans have marched, organized, petitioned, fought, and even died to extend those rights to others, to widen the circle of opportunity for others, and to perfect this Union we love so much.

That's why I want to say a special thanks to the men and women of our Armed Forces and the families who serve with them, especially those servicemembers who spent this most American of holidays serving your country far from home.

You keep us safe, and you keep the United States of America a shining beacon of hope for the world. And for that, you and your families deserve not only the appreciation of a grateful nation, but our enduring commitment to serve you as well as you've served us.

God bless you all, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:55 a.m. on July 3 in the Map Room at

the White House for broadcast on July 4. In the address, the President referred to Timothy M. Howard, goalkeeper, U.S. Men's National Soccer Team. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 3, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 4.

Remarks at a Naturalization Ceremony for Active Duty Sevicemembers and Military Spouses
July 4, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Please be seated. Good morning to the—good morning and welcome to the White House. And happy Fourth of July!

Now, Deputy Secretary Mayorkas, thank you for taking care of the important part of this morning, which is administering the oath. That's the thing that we wanted to make sure we got right. To Acting Deputy Director Jones; to family, friends, distinguished guests: Thank you all for being here. And finally, to these 25 men and women, servicemembers and spouses, it is an honor to join everyone here, for the first time, in calling you "our fellow Americans."

Now, this is one of my favorite events to do, and not just because we get to have a barbecue and watch fireworks later. [*Laughter*] It's because each of you has traveled a long journey to this moment, journeys that began in places like Jamaica and Germany, China and Guatemala. And yet somehow—either because your parents brought you here as children or because you made the choice yourselves as adults—you ended up here in America.

And then many of you did something extraordinary: You signed up to serve in the United States military. You answered the call to fight and potentially to give your life for a country that you didn't fully belong to yet. You understood what makes us American is not just circumstances of birth or the names in our family tree, it's that timeless belief that from many we are one; that we are bound together by adherence to a set of beliefs and unalienable rights; that we have certain obligations to each other, to look after each other, and to serve one another. And over the years, that's exactly what you've done.

Rodrigo Laquian came to the United States from the Philippines. He joined the Navy because, he said, he "wanted to be a part of something big and important. To be a part of a great cause." Today Petty Officer Second Class Laquian is still part of that great cause, and today he's also an American citizen.

Stephanie Van Ausdall moved here from Canada with her mom when she was 18 years old. And today she's 26 and a sergeant in the Army. Stephanie says she joined the military "to give my children someone to look up to and someone they can be proud of." Stephanie, I know that you've made your children and all of us very proud.

Oscar Gonzalez was born in Guatemala and became a marine last year. Becoming a citizen, he says, means becoming part of a "society that strives and stands for good all around the world—just being a part of that makes me complete." Well, Oscar, welcoming you as an American citizen makes our country a little more complete, so thank you.

And then, there are those of you who married an American servicemember, and as a military spouse, you've been serving our country as well. Diana Baker is originally from Kenya and met her husband Kowaine in Germany. Today, she's a nurse at Frederick Memorial Hospital in Maryland, and she and her husband have four beautiful children. In Diana's words, "Becoming a citizen of the United States is like joining a club of the best of the best." [*Laughter*] And I agree. Congratulations, Diana, on joining the club.

Together, all of you remind us that America is and always has been a nation of immigrants. Throughout our history, immigrants have come to our shores in wave after wave, from every corner of the globe. Every one of us, un-

less we're Native American, has an ancestor who was born somewhere else.

And even though we haven't always looked the same or spoken the same language, as Americans, we've done big things together. We've won this country's freedom together. We've built our greatest cities together. We've defended our way of life together. We've continued to perfect our Union together.

And that's what makes America special. That's what makes us strong. The basic idea of welcoming immigrants to our shores is central to our way of life, it is in our DNA. We believe our diversity, our differences, when joined together by a common set of ideals, makes us stronger, makes us more creative, makes us different. From all these different strands, we make something new here in America. And that's why, if we want to keep attracting the best and the brightest from beyond our shores, we're going to have to fix our immigration system, which is broken, and pass commonsense immigration reform.

We shouldn't be making it harder for the best and the brightest to come here and create jobs here and grow our economy here. We should be making it easier. And that's why I'm going to keep doing——

[*At this point, an audience member applauded.*]

He agrees with me. [*Applause*] So I'm going to keep doing everything I can do to keep making our immigration system smarter and more efficient so hard-working men and women like all of you have the opportunity to join the American family and to serve our great Nation, so we can be stronger and more prosperous and more whole together.

I'll close with a quick story. George Mardikian was an immigrant from Armenia who became a famous chef. And George had a quote that I think will ring true for most immigrants. He said, "You who have been born in America, I wish I could make you understand what it is like not to be an American—not to have been an American all your life—and then suddenly, to be one, for that moment and forever after."

Today, on this Fourth of July, all across the country—from Thomas Jefferson's Monticello to the Alamodome in Texas—immigrants from around the world are taking the oath of citizenship. And many of them have worked and sacrificed for years to get to this moment. All of them have done it for something none of us should ever take for granted: the right to be called an American, from this moment and forever after.

And that fact should give us hope and should make us confident about the future of our country. Because as long as there are men and women like all of you who are willing to give so much for the right to call yourselves Americans, and as long as we do our part to keep the door open to those who are willing to earn their citizenship, then we're going to keep on growing our economy, we'll continue to journey forward, and we'll remind the world why the United States of America is and always will be the greatest nation on Earth. And we're very proud of you. Congratulations.

God bless you. God bless the United States of America. And now I'd like to turn it over to Deputy Secretary Mayorkas. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas; and Rendell Jones, Acting Deputy Director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration
July 4, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! Happy Fourth of July! Welcome to the White House!

Audience member. Thank you!

The First Lady. You're welcome!

The President. No, thank you. [*Laughter*]

Now, this little party is something we've been doing every year, because there's no group that we'd rather spend time with on this

most American of holidays than with you: the extraordinary men and women of America's military. And because of you, we're safe, we're free. You depend—we depend on you for our way of life, and the sacrifices you make are extraordinary.

Now, in the house we've got Army. We've got Navy. We've got Air Force. We've got Marines. We've got Coast Guard. And most important, we've got the incredible spouses and children. Give it up for our outstanding military families.

To help us celebrate, we've got our outstanding Marine Band. Later on, we're going to bring out Pitbull and his band. So we want to see if you like to party. [*Laughter*] And of course, this is always a special day for us because this is Malia's birthday.

Audience member. She can get her license!

The First Lady. Oh, she's going to get her license. [*Laughter*]

The President. She is. She's getting her license, but she has to practice a little bit before that happens. [*Laughter*]

Now, this is a gorgeous day. We want you to enjoy yourselves, so I'm going to keep my remarks brief. But it is important to remember why we're here.

Two hundred and thirty-eight years ago, our Founders came together and declared a new nation and a revolutionary idea: the belief that we are all created equal, that we're free to govern ourselves, that each of us is entitled to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

And in the generations that have followed—through war and peace, through depression and prosperity—these truths have guided us as we have built the greatest democratic, economic, and military force the world has ever known.

So today, immigrants from around the world dream of coming to our shores. Young people aspire to study at our universities. Other nations look to us for support and leadership in times of disaster and conflict and uncertainty. And when the world looks to America, so often they look to all of you, the men and women of our Armed Forces. Every day, at home and abroad, you're working to uphold those ideals first declared in that Philadelphia hall more than two centuries ago. Every day, you give meaning to that basic notion that as Americans, we take care of each other. And so today we honor all of you.

And we salute some of the folks who are here with us on this balcony. We salute our soldiers, like Chief Warrant Officer Tommy Oroho, who has served this Nation in uniform for 27 years, including deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. Two summers ago, Tom was at the beach, saw a young girl and her father who had been swept out to sea, and jumped into dangerous riptide and pulled them back to safety. That's the kind of service we expect from our outstanding soldiers. Please give it up for Tom. Thank you.

We salute our sailors, like Seaman Reverlie Thomas, who came to America 21 years ago from Trinidad. She served a tour in the Persian Gulf for the Navy. Just a few hours ago here at the White House, I was proud to welcome Seaman Thomas and 24 other servicemembers and military spouses as our newest American citizens. Thank you Reverlie, and congratulations.

We salute our airmen, like Technical Sergeant Cheryl Uylaki, who manages the Fisher House at Dover Air Force Base, ensuring the families of our fallen are always provided comfort and care worthy of their profound sacrifice. We're so grateful to you, Cheryl, for your great work.

We salute our marines, like Sergeant Isaac Gallegos, who was severely wounded after an IED explosion in Iraq 8 years ago. He suffered burns on almost every inch of his face. He was pronounced dead three separate times. Undergone 161 surgeries. But he is here standing with us today, pursuing a master's degree, working full time for the Navy. That's what we're talking about when we talk about marines. Give it up for Isaac.

We salute our Coasties, like Lieutenant Commander Sean Plankey, who helped lead a cyber team in Afghanistan that supported our troops during firefights and helped prevent the detonation of remote-controlled IEDs, saving countless of lives. So thank you, Sean.

And we salute our military families: the spouses who put their careers on hold for their loved ones, the children who pick up extra chores while Mom or Dad is deployed, the siblings and parents and extended family members who serve the country every single day. You're the reason Michelle and Jill Biden started the Joining Forces initiative, to make sure America is supporting you too. And today we honor your service here today.

So, as we pause on this Fourth of July to celebrate what makes us American, we salute all of you whose service and sacrifice renews that promise of America every single day. On behalf of the entire country, Michelle and I simply want to say thank you to all of you for your courage and your strength and your unending service to this Nation.

Happy Fourth of July, everybody. Have a great party. Have a hotdog. Have a hamburger. We want to see you dancing. God bless you all. God bless the United States of America. Hey! Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:56 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musician Armando C. "Pitbull" Pérez. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 5.

Remarks on Education Prior to a Lunch With Teachers
July 7, 2014

Well, good afternoon, everybody. I am here with some outstanding teachers as well as Secretary Arne Duncan. And the reason we're here is with the school year now over, it is a great time for us to focus on what we need to do to make sure that next year and the year after that and the year after that continues to improve for students all across this country.

The one ingredient that we know makes an enormous difference is a great teacher, and we have four of the best teachers in the country here. But what we also know is that there are outstanding teachers all across the country, and Arne, myself, I suspect many of you had wonderful teachers that made all the difference in your lives and allowed you to be excited about learning and set you on a path for an extraordinary career.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of kids around the country who are not getting the kind of teaching that they need, not because there aren't a whole lot of great potential teachers out there, but because we're not doing enough to put a lot of our teachers in a position to succeed. They may not be getting the training they need; they may not be getting the professional development and support that they need in the classroom. And part of our goal since we came into office, since Arne became Secretary of Education, is how do we continually improve how teachers can get better each and every year.

Of particular concern is the fact that, typically, the least experienced teachers, the ones with the least support, often end up in the poorest schools. So we have a problem in which the kids who need the most skilled teachers are the least likely to get them. And the most talented and skilled teachers oftentimes are teaching the kids who are already the best prepared and have the most resources outside of the school in order to succeed.

So what we're trying to do today—and Arne is going to have more to say about this this afternoon because there are a whole bunch of other teachers who are here in town—is to highlight what we're calling Excellent Educators for All. It's going to be a program in which we ask States to take a look at where they're distributing great teachers, what are they doing in order to train and promote and place teachers in some of the toughest environments for children. And what we're also going to be doing is providing technical assistance, highlighting best practices, all with the intention of making sure that wherever a child is, anywhere in the country, they've got that opportunity to have somebody in front of the classroom or beside them, guiding them, mentoring them, helping them learn.

And when I think about my own experience, the only reason I'm here in the White House is because I had some extraordinary teachers as well as a pretty extraordinary mom and grandparents. And I think everybody sitting around this table probably feels the same way. I suspect that's part of what inspired some of these people to become teachers. We want to make sure every child has that access to excellent teachers, and we're very confident that if we can lift up what works, that there are going to be a lot of States that want to adapt it.

So, unfortunately, right now they don't necessarily have the information, and as I said, if we do nothing, if we don't highlight the problem, then inevitably, the kids who probably need the less help get the most, and the kids who need the most help are getting the least. That's something that we're going to need to reverse not just because it's good for these kids; we know that if they've got a great teacher, they're more likely to graduate, more likely to go to college, more likely to succeed in their career. It's also necessary for our economy, because we've got too many kids who are trapped in situations in which they're not able to realize their full potential.

So I want to thank all these folks for being here, and I'm really looking forward to listening to them to find out what they think can be most helpful in promoting excellence in teaching. All right?

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Blue Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Justin Minkel, teacher, Jones Elementary School, Springdale, AR; Dwight M. Davis, teacher, Wheatly Education Campus in Washington, DC; Leslie Ross, teacher, Allen Middle School in Greensboro, NC; and Leshawna Coleman, an itinerant teacher of English as a Second Language in Philadelphia, PA.

Statement on the United States-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue
July 8, 2014

It is an honor to greet the American and Chinese delegations to the sixth round of the United States-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED). I want to thank President Xi, Vice Premier Wang, State Councilor Yang, and the entire Chinese delegation for hosting this year's S&ED and for their warm reception of the American delegation.

This year marks a special milestone in the U.S.-China relationship: It is the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between our two great nations. Today, instead of living detached from each other as we did 35 years ago, the United States and China embrace the benefits of strengthening ties and acknowledge the growing interdependence of our economic destinies. This anniversary provides an opportunity to take stock of the deepening exchanges between our two peoples, the range of cooperation between our two countries on shared security and economic challenges, and dealing forthrightly with our differences. It is also an opportunity for the United States and China to reaffirm our commitment to working jointly to build a positive, more secure, and prosperous future for all our citizens.

As the premier mechanism for dialogue between the United States and China, the S&ED offers us a chance annually to exchange views on a diverse range of bilateral, regional, and global challenges critical to both our countries. Building on the accomplishments of the previous five rounds of the S&ED, this year's dialogue promises to further advance our cooperative efforts to identify solutions to problems that no country can address on its own. Our efforts to promote economic prosperity, cooperation in Asia, energy security, and security in cyberspace—including at the G–20, APEC, and the Nuclear Security Summit—have a significant and positive impact for our citizens and for the broader international community.

The United States welcomes the emergence of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous China. We are committed to the shared goal of developing over time a "new model" of relations

with China defined by increased practical cooperation and constructive management of differences. We should use the S&ED to demonstrate to the world that, even in a relationship as complex as ours, we remain determined to ensure that cooperation defines the overall relationship.

President Xi and I have worked hard, including in meetings at Sunnylands, St. Petersburg, and The Hague, and in communications between meetings, to make sure that our relationship is stable, resilient, and delivering results for our peoples.

We have significantly enhanced our cooperation on climate change in the past year, including through our commitment to phase down hydrofluorocarbons, the launch of five initiatives under the U.S.-China Climate Change Working Group, and our policy dialogue on the international climate negotiations. Over the past year, we also found new ways to collaborate on shared energy security and sustainability interests, ranging from advancing the safe development of shale gas and renewable technologies to initiating a G–20 fossil fuel subsidy peer review and enhancing our ability to respond to oil market emergencies. On regional security issues, we are working to realize an international solution to Iran's nuclear program, just as we are working together to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to bolster political stability and economic revitalization in Afghanistan. And on economic issues, we are working to establish a level, competitive playing field for our firms that is based on internationally agreed-upon rules of the road on trade, investment, intellectual property, and cybersecurity. I look forward to addressing all of these issues with President Xi when I visit Beijing for APEC in November. That trip will be my second visit to China, and I can think of no better time to advance our relationship than when we are celebrating our 35th anniversary.

The United States and China will not always see eye to eye on every issue. That is to be expected for two nations with different histories and cultures. It also is why we need to build our relationship around common challenges, mutual responsibilities, and shared interests, even while we candidly address our differences. From my meetings with President Xi to the S&ED meetings you will be holding over the next 2 days, to the growing number of student exchanges supported by organizations like the 100,000 Strong Foundation, all of these interactions underscore the promise of a resilient and cooperative United States-China relationship.

Message to the Congress on Additional Steps To Address the National Emergency With Respect to the Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

July 8, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") taking additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13413 of October 27, 2006 (E.O. 13413).

In E.O. 13413, it was determined that the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has been marked by widespread violence and atrocities that continue to threaten regional stability and was addressed by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 1596 of April 18, 2005, Resolution 1649 of December 21, 2005, and Resolution 1698 of July 31, 2006, constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. To address that threat, E.O. 13413 blocks the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to E.O. 13413 or determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with

the Secretary of State, to meet criteria specified in E.O. 13413.

In view of multiple additional United Nations Security Council Resolutions including, most recently, Resolution 2136 of January 30, 2014, I am issuing the order to take additional steps to deal with the national emergency declared in E.O. 13413, and to address the continuation of activities that threaten the peace, security, or stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the surrounding region, including operations by armed groups, widespread violence and atrocities, human rights abuses, recruitment and use of child soldiers, attacks on peacekeepers, obstruction of humanitarian operations, and exploitation of natural resources to finance persons engaged in these activities.

The order amends the designation criteria specified in E.O. 13413. As amended by the order, E.O. 13413 provides for the designation of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to be a political or military leader of a foreign armed group operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that impedes the disarmament, demobilization, voluntary repatriation, resettlement, or reintegration of combatants;
- to be a political or military leader of a Congolese armed group that impedes the disarmament, demobilization, voluntary repatriation, resettlement, or reintegration of combatants;
- to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have engaged in, directly or indirectly, any of the following in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo:
  - actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
  - actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
  - the targeting of women, children, or any civilians through the commission of acts of violence (including killing, maiming, torture, or rape or other sexual violence), abduction, forced displacement, or attacks on schools, hospitals, religious sites, or locations where civilians are seeking refuge, or through conduct that would constitute a serious abuse or violation of human rights or a violation of international humanitarian law;
  - the use or recruitment of children by armed groups or armed forces in the context of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
  - the obstruction of the delivery or distribution of, or access to, humanitarian assistance;
  - attacks against United Nations missions, international security presences, or other peacekeeping operations; or
  - support to persons, including armed groups, involved in activities that threaten the peace, security, or stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo or that undermine democratic processes or institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, through the illicit trade in natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- except where intended for the authorized support of humanitarian activities or the authorized use by or support of peacekeeping, international, or government forces, to have directly or indirectly supplied, sold, or transferred to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or been the recipient in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo of, arms and related materiel, including military aircraft and equipment, or advice, training, or assistance, including financing and financial assistance, related to military activities;
- to be a leader of (i) an entity, including any armed group, that has, or whose members have, engaged in any of the activities described above or (ii) an entity

whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13413;

- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, logistical, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of (i) any of the activities described above or (ii) any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13413; or
- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13413.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and the United Nations Participation Act as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 8, 2014.

NOTE: The message referred to Executive Order 13671, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting an Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Request To Address the Increase in Child and Adult Migration From Central America in the Río Grande Valley Areas of the Southwest Border and Wildfire Suppression Activities
July 8, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On June 30, I provided an update on my Administration's efforts in addressing the urgent humanitarian situation on both sides of the Southwest border with an aggressive, unified, and coordinated Federal response. Today, I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed emergency supplemental appropriations request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 that includes $3.7 billion to comprehensively address this urgent humanitarian situation.

This funding would support a sustained border security surge through enhanced domestic enforcement, including air surveillance; expenses related to the repatriation and reintegration of migrants; associated transportation costs; additional immigration judge teams, immigration prosecutors, and immigration litigation attorneys to ensure cases are processed fairly and as quickly as possible; funding to address the root causes of migration; public diplomacy and international information programs; the operational costs of responding to the significant rise in apprehensions of unaccompanied children and adults traveling with children; and expenses associated with the appropriate care for those apprehended, consistent with Federal law, and the necessary medical response.

I am also requesting $615 million for emergency wildfire suppression activities for FY 2014, and a new discretionary cap adjustment for wildfire suppression operations starting in FY 2015. This funding would provide for the necessary expenses for wildfire suppression and rehabilitation activities this fiscal year so we can fight fires without having to resort to damaging transfers from our wildfire treatment and protection activities. Too often in recent years, this cycle of transfers has undermined our efforts to prepare for and reduce

the severity of wildfires, which is both fiscally imprudent and self-defeating.

My request includes language to support a discretionary cap adjustment to allow the Federal Government to respond to severe, complex, and threatening fires or a severe fire season in the same way as we fund other natural disasters such as hurricanes or earthquakes. This approach would provide funding certainty in future years for firefighting costs, free up resources to invest in areas that will promote long-term forest health and reduce fire risk, and maintain fiscal responsibility by addressing wildfire disaster needs through agreed-upon funding mechanisms.

My Administration requests that the funding described above be designated as emergency requirements pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, (BBEDCA). In addition, my Administration requests that a new cap adjustment for wildfire suppression operations be added to section 251(b)(2) of BBEDCA.

I urge the Congress to act expeditiously in considering this important request, the details of which are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Finally, separate from this request, my Administration will continue to work with the Congress—following up on my letter to congressional leadership on June 30, 2014—to ensure that we have the legal authorities to maximize the impact of our efforts, including providing the Secretary of Homeland Security additional authority to exercise discretion in processing the return and removal of unaccompanied minor children from non-contiguous countries like Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and increasing penalties for those who smuggle vulnerable migrants, like children.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks in Denver, Colorado
July 9, 2014

The President. Hello, Denver!

Audience members. Hello!

The President. Everybody, have a seat. So I think we should just stay here all afternoon and have a picnic. This is really nice around here. Wow! What a gorgeous day.

Can everybody please give Alex a big round of applause for that great introduction? It is so good to be back in Denver. It is great to be back in Colorado. As all of you know, I spent a lot of time here in my last campaign. I have been itching to get back.

I got to have dinner last night with Alex and four other Coloradans—Elizabeth Cooper, Leslie Gresham, Carolyn Reed and her husband David—at the Wazee Supper Club. It was tasty. That was some good pizza. [*Laughter*] And then, I walked down the block to shoot some pool with Governor Hickenlooper at his old bar, the Wynkoop Brewing Company. You should not ask him who won. [*Laughter*] No, no, you just—really, don't ask Governor Hickenlooper who won at pool. [*Laughter*] And it's a great time to be in this beautiful park with my friend Ken Salazar, who I love and I haven't seen in a while. There he is right there. As well as your Congressman, Ed Perlmutter. Yay, Ed.

So let me tell you why I'm here. Every day, we get thousands of letters and e-mails at the White House. I think it's something like 40,000 a day of some sort of correspondence. And every night, our Correspondence Office selects 10 letters for me to read. And I've been doing that since I first came into office. And it's one of the most important things I do—it's right there next to my national security briefing and whatever policy issues that we're supposed to be working on—because it reminds me of why I ran for office.

And so I have a chance just to hear from people as they tell their stories. They talk about the hardships that they're going through; sometimes, they talk about a success that they've

had. Kids write to me, asking questions about what I'm doing about climate change or how old is Bo. [*Laughter*] So people describe to me their fears and their hopes not just for themselves, but also for their children and their grandchildren and for the country. And sometimes, they thank me for taking a position on an issue. And sometimes, they say, how dare you take that position on an issue? And sometimes, people say they're proud of the work that I've done, and sometimes, people call me an idiot—or worse than an idiot—which is how I know that I'm getting a good sample. [*Laughter*]

So Alex wrote to tell me that the day after my State of the Union Address, her boss gave her a raise to $10.10 an hour. Alex actually, last night, confessed she actually didn't watch my State of the Union Address. [*Laughter*] Which, hey, I understand. [*Laughter*] When I was her age, I'm sure I missed a whole bunch of State of the Union Addresses. But her boss caught it, and he decided, let me make sure I'm paying my employees a fair wage.

Carolyn, from up in Wellington, wrote to say she and David used an SBA loan from the Recovery Act to open the third of their six Silver Mine Subs shops. They had—[*applause*]. Oh, you know Silver Mine? All right. Everybody is happy about that. It was a wonderful story because both her and her husband were Teamsters. See, she worked at UPS, and he worked for Bud. And they just knew that they wanted to start something of their own. And she described to us last night what it was like to take the risk to mortgage the house, make a business for herself, and then now to have a hundred employees and to be giving those folks an opportunity. They're hiring, by the way—[*laughter*]—in case people are interested.

Leslie, from Parker, wrote to say she'd been teaching preschool for 26 years and was an early childhood education educator of the year, just a wonderful teacher. But she described the difference she could see in children who had that early exposure to the kind of classroom education that she's providing.

And Elizabeth, who's going to be a junior this fall at the University of Northern Colorado, wrote to tell me how hard it is for middle class families like hers to afford college. And she shared something I know many of you feel when you wonder what the heck is going on in Washington. She wrote she feels "not significant enough to be addressed, not poor enough for people to worry about, and not rich enough to be cared about." That's what she wrote.

So part of the reason I wanted to have dinner with these folks is because they reminded me of why I ran for office and what I'm supposed to be doing every single day. And the reason I'm here today is very simple: I'm here because of Elizabeth and Alex and Carolyn and Leslie. And I'm here for every American who works their tail off and does everything right and who believes in the American Dream and asks for nothing but a chance at a decent life for themselves and their families. That's why I'm here. And to tell all of you that I hear you.

I mean, sometimes, it's as simple as that, that I am listening and paying attention, partly because when I listen to Alex or I listen to Carolyn or I listen to any of the folks that I met with, I see myself in them. Because I remember my first minimum wage job—at Baskin Robbins, by the way—[*laughter*]—I had to wear a cap and an apron—and how, like, a little raise would have really helped. I think about what it was like for me to finance college. I think about childcare costs when Michelle and I were first starting out with Malia and Sasha. Your stories are ours. You're why I ran.

And so what I want to make sure of is, is that as screwed up sometimes as Washington gets, that everybody here understands that there's progress to be made and that there's somebody out there who's fighting for them, even if it sometimes feels like the system's rigged against them.

The other thing I want to make sure people understand is, is that we are making progress, as bad as the news looks if all you were doing was watching cable TV all day long. Yes, the crisis that hit towards the end of my first campaign hit us all really badly; 2007, 2008, that was rough. But today, our businesses have added nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. Construction and housing are rebounding. Our auto industry is booming.

Manufacturing is adding jobs for the first time since the nineties. The unemployment rate has fallen to its lowest point since September of 2008, the fastest 1-year drop in nearly 30 years.

And look, most of this is attributable to you, the American people, starting businesses and paying down debt and tightening belts and doing all kinds of stuff just to make sure that you kept on and were able to look after your families. But the decisions we made early on not only stopped the slide, but also built a new foundation for our economy, and they're paying off now.

We're more energy independent. We've tripled the electricity we generate from the wind, ten times from the sun, creating jobs across the country, while producing more oil at home than we buy abroad for the first time in nearly 20 years. Our energy sector is booming. And by the way, we're doing that while reducing our carbon emissions more than any other country over the last 5 years. So we're making progress on climate change as well.

In education, our high school graduation rate is at a record high. The Latino dropout rate has dropped in half. More young people are graduating from college than ever before. We made our Tax Code fairer. We cut our deficits by more than half. We've given millions more Americans the security of health care that means you won't go broke just because you get sick.

So thanks to the hard work of you, and some actually pretty smart policies by us—[*laughter*]—we have come farther and recovered faster than almost any other advanced nation on Earth. More companies are choosing to bring back jobs from overseas. Thanks to our leadership in technology and innovation, for the first time in more than a decade, business leaders around the world have declared, China is not number one when it comes to the place to invest, the United States is. And our lead is growing.

So, despite what you may hear, there is no doubt we are making progress. By almost every measure, we are better off than when I took office—by almost every measure. But here's the thing, and this is why I've got to get out more and have lunch with—and pizza with the—with my friends, because the fact is, we know we've still got a long way to go.

Here's the challenge: We've created more jobs at this point of the year than any year since 1999. More jobs have been created in the first half of this year than we have since the nineties. But many families barely earn what they did in the nineties. Corporate profits are higher than ever. CEOs make more than ever. But most people are working harder than ever just to get by. Wages, incomes have flatlined. They have not gone up.

So, as a whole, the country is doing better, but too much improvement goes to the folks at the top and not enough of it is making a difference in the lives of ordinary Americans. And that's what we should be spending all our time talking about: How do we reverse some of those trends? That's what I came to Denver to talk about: that. That issue: How do we make sure if you work hard, do the right thing, you can get ahead? Washington may chase whatever political story they think will get attention, but to me the only story that matters is your story. And I am here to say that this country does not succeed when just a few at the top do well and everybody else is treading water. America does better when the middle class does better, when folks who work hard can afford to buy what they make and provide for our families and leave something better for our kids.

So this is what I'm spending time on. This is what I'm fighting for. This is my opportunity agenda. I'm focused on how do we create good jobs that pay good wages, jobs in American manufacturing and construction, in American energy and innovation.

I'm fighting for an opportunity agenda that trains more workers with the skills to fill those jobs at community colleges and in apprenticeships and internships that give young people a solid start.

We're fighting for an opportunity agenda that guarantees every child a world-class education, from high-quality pre-K to a redesigned high school, to colleges and a rewarding career

that's affordable and you're not loaded up with debt.

We're fighting to make sure your hard work pays off with higher wages that you can live on and savings you can retire on; workplace flexibility so if your kids get sick or you've got an ailing parent, you're not looking at losing your job; overtime pay that you've earned; affordable health care that's there when you get sick and you need it most.

We're fighting for the idea that everybody gets opportunity, no matter what you look like or where you come from or who you love or how you grew up or what your last name is. America is a place where you should be able to make it if you try.

And the good news is, we actually know how to do some of these things. If we make just some modest changes—we don't need revolutionary changes. If we made some modest changes, made some sensible decisions we'd create more jobs, we'd lift more income, we'd strengthen the middle class. We wouldn't solve every problem overnight, but we'd be making more progress even than we're already making. That's what we should be doing. And of course, that's what drives you nuts about Washington, because that's not what it's doing. [*Laughter*]

After everything we've been through together, you'd think that these challenges would absorb the attention of folks in Washington. But these days, basic, commonsense ideas cannot get through Congress. Basic stuff, stuff that used to be uncontroversial. It used to be that Republicans, Democrats, everybody said, you know what, America, it's a good thing when we build roads and bridges and a smart grid and—to transmit energy. All those things are good for business, they're good for workers, it helps. Now can't—they can't seem to pass a bill just to fund basic projects that we know are good for our economy.

We have evidence that early childhood education, every dollar we spend there, you get 7 bucks back because kids do better in school, they don't drop out, they're less likely to get in trouble. They're less likely to go to jail. They're less—more likely to be taxpayers later on. But you look at Congress: They can't do it.

Think about it. So far this year, Republicans in Congress have blocked or voted down every serious idea to strengthen the middle class. They've said no to raising the minimum wage. They said no to fair pay legislation so that women are getting paid the same as men for doing the same work. They said no to unemployment insurance for Americans who are out there looking for a new job. I know, because I get letters from them every day, folks who have worked all their lives, paid taxes all their lives. And now, right when they're having a tough time because of an unprecedented recession that we just went through, and they need a little help so they don't lose their house or they don't lose their car, suddenly, Congress can't do it.

Congress just said no to fixing our broken immigration system in a way that strengthens our borders and our businesses, despite the fact that everybody from law enforcement to corporations to evangelicals—there's a coalition around immigration reform that's unprecedented. These guys still can't get their act together.

Rather than invest in education that lets working families get ahead, they voted to give another massive tax cut to the wealthiest Americans. Rather than invest in roads and bridges to create construction jobs and help our businesses succeed, they've chosen to preserve and protect tax loopholes for companies that shift their profits overseas that don't do anybody any good.

Republicans in Congress right now have shown over and over, they'll do anything to rig the system for those at the top or to try to score political points on me, even if the obstruction keeps the system rigged against the middle class. I mean, the best thing you can say for them this year is they haven't yet shut down the Government so far or threatened to go deadbeat on America's obligations. But it is still early, so—[*applause*].

Now, I always have to say this: I don't think that they're all terrible people. I think they love their families. They love the country. They've got a different economic theory. Maybe they don't know what ordinary folks are

going through. But maybe it's not that they don't get it. Maybe it's just because the theory they have is, is that if the economy is doing good for folks at the very top, then it's going to help everybody else, despite the fact that we have evidence over and over again that those theories have failed the middle class.

More tax breaks to those at the top, fewer investments in things like education. Looser rules for big banks or credit card companies or polluters or insurers—they believe all that stuff really makes the economy hum and prosperity trickles down.

Just because they believe it doesn't mean the rest of us believe it, because we know from our history, it doesn't work. Our economy grows best from the middle out, when everybody has a shot, everybody is doing well. And with a slight change of priorities, we could do it. We could help a lot more Americans get ahead. And folks at the top will do well too. Everybody will do better.

And by the way, that—Republicans used to understand this. This is not, like, a crazy Democratic, socialist idea. [*Laughter*] My favorite President is a Republican, Abraham Lincoln, who built—helped build a transcontinental railroad and invested in the Homestead Act that helped people get land and invested in our first major Federal scientific research; understood that you make these common investments—land-lease colleges—or land-grant colleges, that all these things would end up giving people tools to improve themselves and thereby improve the country. And we couldn't all do it alone. We had to do it with each other.

This wasn't just a Democratic idea. Eisenhower built the Interstate Highway System. Teddy Roosevelt started our national parks. These are basic ideas that made America work. They're not partisan. So I'm going to keep on working with Republicans and Democrats to try to get things moving over there.

In the meantime, I'm not going to stand by while partisan gridlock or political games threaten the hard work of millions of Americans. So, wherever and whenever I can go ahead and help families like yours—I've got the legal authority to do it—I'm going to do it. I'm not going to wait. [*Applause*] Not going to wait.

That's why I've taken a bunch of actions this year just to help working Americans while still reaching out to Congress. What I've said to them is, if you're not acting, I'm going to go ahead and do what I can.

So, if Congress won't act to make sure woman—women have the ability to get equal pay for equal work, I made sure that women had the protections they need to fight for fair pay in the workplace. I think when women succeed, America succeeds. We're going to keep on investing in that.

If Congress won't act to create jobs in construction or manufacturing, we're going to go ahead and speed up permits for big projects that are already funded and launch new hubs to attract more high-tech manufacturing jobs. Because I want to make sure the next revolution in manufacturing and technology is an American revolution, right here in the United States. I don't want it going to France or Germany or China. I want it to happen here.

If Congress won't act to help more young people manage their student loan debt so far—and Republicans voted against a bill that would have allowed young people to refinance at lower rates—I went ahead and gave nearly 5 million Americans the opportunity to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their income. I don't want them saddled with debt before they start out in life. I want to make sure that they're able to pursue a career in teaching or social work or work in a non-for-profit, and they can still afford it.

Republicans so far refuse to raise workers' wages. I did what I could. I'm—it turns out, I'm a pretty big employer. [*Laughter*] So I said, any Federal worker—anybody who works for Federal contractors, they're going to have to pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour. And I asked business owners and Governors and mayors and State legislators to do what they could on their own.

And by at way, since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, 13 States have gone ahead and raised theirs, and those States have seen higher job growth than the States

that haven't raised their minimum wage. And more and more business owners are choosing to lift wages for workers like Alex. America needs a raise. And when—by the way, when America needs a raise—I was talking to Carolyn, our sub owner, last night, and she made the simple point, look, I want tax cuts and raises for my workers and for others who don't have a lot because that means they're going to buy more sandwiches. I mean, I can already afford a sub sandwich. If you give me a tax cut, I'm not going to spend—I'm not going to buy more sub sandwiches; I can only eat so many. [*Laughter*] But that's true about the economy generally. When you give tax breaks and you give raises, you raise the minimum wage, you give a bigger chance to folks who are climbing the ladder, working hard, don't have a lot at the end of the month, that money gets churned back into the economy. And the whole economy does better, including the businesses.

Now, I gather that some of the Republicans in Congress are mad at me for going ahead and doing things. [*Laughter*] And I don't know which things they find most offensive, whether it's creating jobs or easing student loan burdens or raising wages, but it's really bothering them. They have a plan to sue me. They have plans to sue me for taking executive actions that are within my authority, while they do nothing.

I have a better idea. They should do something. I will work with them. Rather than engage in political stunts that waste time and taxpayer money, join me. Let's do some things together. Let's build some roads. Let's give America a raise. Let's help families with childcare costs. There are all kinds of things we can do. Don't be mad at me for doing something. How about teaming up with me? Let's all do something. Let's all get America working.

We are better than this. Gosh, aren't—doesn't it get you just frustrated? [*Laughter*] We could do so much more if Republicans in Congress focused less on protecting the folks who've got the lobbyists and all that soft money out there. Stop worrying about the folks who already got—are doing just fine. Focus more on stoking opportunity for all people. Work with me. That's the American way. That's what makes this country great, a sense of common purpose and patriotism, an economic patriotism that says we fall and we rise as one Nation, as one people.

So we can rally America around an economic patriotism that says, don't give tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires, let's give more tax breaks to help working families pay for childcare or college.

Let's rally around a patriotism that says, don't give tax loopholes to corporations shifting jobs overseas, let's put people back to work here rebuilding our roads, our bridges, our airports, making sure the next generation of manufacturing is made in America. That's patriotism. [*Applause*] That's patriotism.

Don't stack the deck in favor of those who've already succeeded. We're stronger when we're helping everybody succeed, cultivating every talent of every child. Every 4-year-old in America, give them high-quality preschool so they're safe and taught well while we go to work, and redesign our high schools to prepare our kids for the 21st century. And tell every American, you know, if your job was stamped "obsolete," if it was shipped overseas, we're going to train you for an even better one.

We need an economic patriotism that says it's a good thing that everybody gets health insurance. That's not a bad thing. That's a good thing. It's a good thing when women are paid the same as men for doing the same work. That's not un-American. It's a good thing when parents have some flexibility when their kids are sick. It will make the employees more loyal; they're more productive. It's a good thing when nobody who works full time is living in poverty. That's not un-American. It's not radical. It's right. It's what built this country.

I know that sometimes, it must be frustrating watching what's going on. I guarantee, I get frustrated. There are some things that I have to mutter under my breath sometimes. [*Laughter*] And the hardest thing to change in politics is a stubborn status quo. And it's harder when Washington seems distracted by everything except the things you care about. And there's a cottage industry in Washington that counts on

you just being cynical about stuff so that you don't vote, you don't get involved, you get discouraged, you say a plague on both your houses. But you can't give into that cynicism. Do not let them win by you being cynical, because despite everything that's happened, despite all the obstruction, America is making progress.

We're better off now than we were 5 years ago. We're going to be better off 5 years from now than we are right now. Despite the unyielding opposition of a few, there are workers who have jobs who didn't have them before. There are families who have health insurance who didn't have them before. There are students who can afford to go to college who couldn't afford to go before. There are troops who are home with their families after serving tour after tour of war. Don't get cynical. Don't do it.

Cynicism is a popular choice these days. It's what passes off for wisdom. [*Laughter*] But cynicism isn't wise. And remember that it is a choice. Cynicism is a choice, and hope is a better choice. And it's a choice that I make every time I sit down with these incredible people that I had dinner with last night. They make me hopeful.

It's the hope that Alex has when she sits down and she picks up a pen and she writes to the President hoping that the system still works; hoping maybe the letter gets there; hoping that I'll listen; hoping that even when Washington seems tone deaf, your voice might reach a President, your voice might reach a crowd in a park, your voice might move fellow citizens to change what needs changing.

Every day, I receive these thousands of acts of hope from you. I'm listening. It's why I ran for office. It's why I'm fighting for you. I will keep treating your cares and concerns as my own. I will keep trying to restore the American Dream for everybody who is willing to work for it.

Thank you, Denver. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 a.m. at Cheesman Park. In his remarks, he referred to Alex Dooley, an employee at a furniture upholstery store in Denver; small-business owner David Johnson, husband of Carolyn Reed; and former Secretary of the Interior Kenneth L. Salazar.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Lunch in Denver
July 9, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. It is good to be back here. [*Laughter*] I love Colorado, love Denver. Everybody looks good in Denver too. [*Laughter*] I don't know what it is, the hair or sun, altitude? I don't know. [*Laughter*] It's just a bunch of good-looking people in Denver, Colorado. [*Laughter*]

We've got some great friends here, and I just want to mention some of them. First of all, nobody has a bigger heart, nobody did better work on behalf of the natural resources of this amazing country of ours, nobody has been a better friend to me than the person who just introduced me. Love him dearly. We came into the Senate together, and our lives have crossed paths ever since, and I'm so very, very proud of him and Hope. So please give Ken Salazar a big round of applause.

To Maggie Fox and Tess Udall, thank you for putting up with somebody in politics. [*Laughter*] That's always rough, but you do it with grace, and we're so grateful to you.

To your wonderful former Governor, Bill Ritter, who continues to do great work on behalf of the environment. My dear friend, who was actually on the steering committee for my first race in '08, one of our national board members, Federico Peña, your former mayor. Somebody who helped begin the tradition of great Democratic Senators from Colorado, Gary Hart is here. There he is. Former Mayor Wellington Webb is here in the house. Andrew Romanoff, who is running for Congress, is

here. My good friend Betsy Markey, who is running for treasurer, is here. There's Betsy.

And all of you are here. [*Laughter*] And I'm happy about that. This is actually the hotel that I stayed in for the convention in 2008. So, as I walked in, the manager says: "Hey, it's great to see you. Do you remember me? How are those wonderful girls? I'll bet they changed a lot." [*Laughter*] And when we were here, Sasha was, I think, about this big. [*Laughter*] And I had to break the news to the manager that, yes, Sasha is taller than you now. [*Laughter*] So yes, things have changed. [*Laughter*]

But what hasn't changed is my incredible faith in the American people. I just came from that gorgeous park of yours, and after having had dinner with some letter writers, people who wrote me letters just telling me about their hopes, their dreams, the challenges that they were facing, we had pizza. Somebody bought me a beer. I walked over—blocked traffic, but I walked over to Hickenlooper's old joint. [*Laughter*] Hickenlooper was there. He challenged me to pool. [*Laughter*] You can ask him how that went. [*Laughter*] I took his lunch money. [*Laughter*]

But in each of these conversations, what I'm always inspired by is the fundamental decency and goodness of the American people: how they work hard, how they care for their families; they're resilient and buoyant; how they're inventive and entrepreneurial. And it's because of all that the country has changed in many ways as much as Sasha has changed since I was last here. When we were here for the convention, we were in a free fall. The economy was actually contracting faster, we now know, in '08 than it did at the outset of the Great Depression. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month.

What we've now seen is 52 straight months of job growth, 10 million jobs created. We've seen the unemployment rate drop faster than any time in the last 30 years. Employment growth actually in this first 6 months has been the fastest since 1999. Housing market has steadily improved, and the stock market and people's 401(k)s restored. Financial system stabilized.

On energy, we produce three times as much wind energy as we did when I came into office, ten times as much solar energy as when I came into office. We have reduced our carbon emissions faster than any other developed country in the world; make greater investments in green energy than any administration in history. We're actually now producing more than we import for the first time in over a couple of decades.

The high school dropout rate gone down; Latino dropout rate actually has been cut in half. College attendance rate at an alltime high. Uninsured keeps going down because of the Affordable Care Act, and health care inflation is actually going up slower than any time in the last 50 years.

We've been able to bring troops home and make sure that our veterans are able to get the kind of education they need to succeed in this new marketplace. Exports are up, farm incomes are up. Things have changed over these last 5 years. There are very few measures by which we are not fundamentally better off than we were when I took office.

But the reason we're here, the reason every race across the country is going to be challenging, including this one, and the reason that your support is going to be so important is that despite the decency of the American people, despite the fact that we have made progress, everybody senses, everybody understands that we've still got some fundamental challenges that have not yet been addressed, and Washington is not addressing them. And it makes people cynical, and it makes people frustrated.

And when I talked to folks last night eating pizza or see them and have a chat with them shooting pool, they all tell me the same thing: We're doing okay, we're making it, but it feels like at the end of every month, no matter how hard we work, it's still kind of a struggle. And when you look at it from a macroeconomic perspective, it's true. The economy is growing, corporate profits soaring, productivity up, but wages and incomes have flatlined. So, although our job growth is as good as anything we've seen since 1999, a lot of people's incomes are the same as they were in 1999, at the same

time as costs for college or other necessities have gone up.

So everything I do, everything Mark does, everything that Michael Bennet does, our agenda is how do we make sure that we are providing ladders of opportunity to people who are willing to work hard, and for folks who are in the middle class, how are we making sure that they can have some basic security and get ahead if they're working hard, if they're doing the right thing.

That's why we're fighting for raising the minimum wage. That's why we think that equal pay for equal work is fundamental. That's why we think that creating workplace flexibility is so critical. That's why trying to make sure that we've got high-quality, accessible, quality pre-K is so critical. That's why making sure that families are getting help when it comes to childcare or a college education is so important. That's why redesigning our high schools to give young people more opportunity in this 21st-century economy and making sure we've got outstanding job training for people who have to start second careers are in place.

Everything we do, our entire agenda, is designed around a very simple premise, which is, if you are willing to work hard—it shouldn't matter what you look like, where you come from, who you love—you can succeed, you can make it. That's what Mark is fighting for every single day.

And the challenge we have is that the other side is—the only thing they seem to be fighting for is for power or their patrons or on behalf of an economic idea, an economic theory that has been proven wrong time and time and time again. This has been, since the Republicans took over the House, the least productive Congress, I don't know when, perhaps in history. Their single accomplishment was shutting down the Government and threatening the full faith and credit of the United States of America.

They've said no to minimum wage. They've said no to fair pay legislation. They've said no to unemployment insurance extensions. They've said no to basic things like infrastructure, rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our airports, things that used to be bipartisan.

And so, understandably, people get frustrated, and they get cynical. They should be frustrated, but they shouldn't be cynical. If nothing else, the main message I want to leave you today is the same one that I said in the park. Cynicism passes for wisdom these days. I think it's a sorry kind of wisdom. It's easy being cynical and doesn't get you anything. Cynicism doesn't get a man to the Moon. Cynicism didn't expand civil rights to people. Cynicism didn't make us an economic superpower. Hope is a better choice. But it's got to be a hope that is backed by action and hope that is backed by organizing and hope that's backed by effort. And it's got to be hope that is supported by outstanding Members of Congress who are there for the right reasons and who are serious.

And Mark Udall is a serious person who is trying to do the right thing and who has the values that we share. He is not an ideologue. He doesn't agree with me on everything. But he believes in the core idea that I think should be what Democrats are all about, this idea that if you work hard, you should be able to make it. And he's there on behalf of working families all across Colorado. And that's worth supporting.

I'll just close by saying 2008 was sort of lightning in a bottle. The convention was pretty fun. [*Laughter*] It was exciting, and the weather was good. But one challenge that I always offered to Democrats is, we do have one congenital disease, which is we're not very good during off-year elections. We don't think it's flashy enough, I don't know. There aren't enough celebrities involved? I mean, I don't know what's going on, but a lot of times, we don't vote at the same rates. We don't pay attention.

Our positions on every major issue enjoys majority support across the country: immigration reform, supported by a majority of Americans; minimum wage, supported by a majority of Americans; equal pay for equal work, supported by the majority of Americans; being good stewards of the environment and dealing with climate change in a serious way, supported by the majority of Americans. We have the support of the majority. It's just the majority doesn't always vote.

So the one thing I want to urge everybody here is to feel the same urgency about this race—about Mark's race, about all the Senate races, about the State treasurer's race, about the Romanoff race—feel that same urgency as you feel about my race back in 2008. Because, ultimately, this is not about one person, it's not about a handful of people; it's about all of us. And we've got to be invested in this. And I know all of you are, and I appreciate you very, very much for that.

All right, let me take a couple of questions. We're going to get the press out of here. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. at the Westin Denver Downtown hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of the Interior Kenneth L. Salazar and his wife Esperanza "Hope" Salazar; Margaret L. Fox, wife, and Tess Udall, daughter, of Sen. Mark Udall; wage worker Alex Dooley, college student Elizabeth Cooper, small-business owners Carolyn Reed and her husband David Johnson, and teacher Leslie Gresham, who had all written letters to the President about issues affecting the middle class; and Gov. John W. Hickenlooper of Colorado. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Julián Castro as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
July 9, 2014

I applaud the bipartisan majority of Senators who today confirmed Julián Castro as our next Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Julián is a proven leader, a champion for safe, affordable housing and strong, sustainable neighborhoods. I know that together with the dedicated professionals at HUD, Julián will help build on the progress we've made battling back from the great recession: rebuilding our housing market, reducing homelessness among veterans, and connecting neighborhoods with good schools and good jobs that help our citizens succeed. Julián has lived the American Dream in his own life, and I'm confident he will help Americans across our country seize their own piece of that dream for themselves and their children.

Statement on the Resignation of National Counterterrorism Center Director Matthew G. Olsen
July 9, 2014

Most Americans may not know Matt Olsen's name, but every American is safer because of his service. As Director of the National Counterterrorism Center for the past 3 years, Matt and the dedicated professionals he has led at the NCTC have been absolutely critical to our success in disrupting terrorist cells, thwarting attacks, and protecting the American people from evolving threats at home and abroad. I've relied on Matt's wise judgment and counsel, and I am especially grateful for his work to ensure that our counterterrorism efforts remain consistent with the rule of law and our values as a nation. As he concludes 24 years of Federal service, I thank Matt for a distinguished career that has left our Nation more secure and even better prepared to meet the threats of our time.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014
July 9, 2014

I applaud the overwhelming majority of lawmakers from both parties who came together on behalf of America's workers to pass the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of

2014. This bipartisan compromise will help workers, including workers with disabilities, access employment, education, job-driven training, and support services that give them the chance to advance their careers and secure the good jobs of the future. Today's vote helps ensure that our workers can earn the skills employers are looking for right now and that American businesses have the talent pool it takes to compete and win in our global economy. I look forward to signing it into law and hope Congress will continue to come together to make progress for America's working families.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 803.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters in Dallas, Texas
July 9, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. Just had a good meeting with Governor Perry, local officials, and faith leaders to talk about the steps that we have taken and that we need to take to address the humanitarian situation on the border. And I want to thank everybody who's been involved for taking the time to talk to me.

It's important to recognize two things. First, the surge of unaccompanied children and adults with children are arriving at one sector of the border, and that's the Río Grande Valley. Second, the issue is not that people are evading our enforcement officials. The issue is that we're apprehending them in large numbers. And we're working to make sure that we have sufficient facilities to detain, house, and process them appropriately, while attending to unaccompanied children with the care and compassion that they deserve while they're in our custody.

While we intend to do the right thing by these children, their parents need to know that this is an incredibly dangerous situation, and it is unlikely that their children will be able to stay. And I've asked parents across Central America not to put their children in harm's way in this fashion.

Now, right now there are more Border Patrol agents and surveillance resources on the ground than at any time in our history. And we deport almost 400,000 migrants each year. But as soon as it became clear that this year's migration to the border was different than in past years, I directed FEMA to coordinate our response at the border. Members of my Cabinet and my staff have made multiple trips to facilities there. And we're also addressing the root of the problem. I sent Vice President Biden and Secretary Kerry and Secretary Johnson to meet with Central American leaders, as well as working with our international partners to go after smugglers who are putting their kids' lives at risk.

And earlier this week, Mexico announced a series of steps that they're going to take on their southern border to help stem the tide of these unaccompanied children.

Last week, I sent a letter to Congress asking them to increase penalties on smugglers and to give us flexibility to move migrants through the system faster.

Yesterday I asked Congress to fund these efforts. About half of the resources would go to border security, enforcement, and expedited removal of people who don't qualify for a humanitarian claim. About half would go to make sure we're treating children humanely. We'd also make investments to further tackle the root problems in Central America.

So right now Congress has the capacity to work with us, work with State officials, local officials, and faith-based groups and non-for-profits who are helping to care for these kids. Congress has the capacity to work with all parties concerned to directly address the situation. They've said they want to see a solution. The supplemental offers them the capacity to vote immediately to get it done.

Of course, in the long run, the best way to truly address this problem is for the House of Representatives to pass legislation fixing our broken immigration system, which, by the way, would include funding for additional thousands of Border Patrol agents, something that

everybody down here that I've talked to indicates is a priority.

And the Senate passed a commonsense, bipartisan bill more than a year ago. It would have strengthened the border, added an additional 20,000 Border Patrol agents. It would have strengthened our backlogged immigration courts. It would have put us in a stronger position to deal with this surge and, in fact, prevent it.

So let me just close by indicating the nature of the conversation that I had with Governor Perry, which I thought was constructive. Governor Perry suggested four specific areas of concern. He was concerned about how many patrol agents were directly at the border. He was concerned that some of the positioning of Border Patrol agents is too far from the border to be effective in deterring folks from coming in as opposed to simply apprehending them. I indicated to him that what he said sounded like it made sense and that, in fact, if we pass the supplemental, we would then have the resources to carry out some of the very things that he's requesting.

On a broader policy level, he indicated concern that right now kids who come to the border from Mexico are immediately deported, but because it's noncontiguous, folks who are coming from Central America have to go through a much lengthier process. I indicated to him that part of what we're looking in the supplemental is some flexibility in terms of being able to preserve the due process rights of individuals who come in, but also to make sure that we're sending a strong signal that they can't simply show up the border and automatically assume that they're going to be absorbed.

He also expressed concerns about how the immigration judicial system works, how the administrative processing works, how long it takes and the fact that oftentimes, people appear, are then essentially released, with a court date that might be 6 months out or 9 months out, and a sizable number, not surprisingly, don't show up.

I indicated to him that if we had more administrative judges, more administrative capacity, we can shrink those wait times. This administrative practice predates my administration and, in fact, has been going on for quite some time, and a lot of it has to do with the fact that there's not enough capacity, both in terms of detention facilities, but also in terms of judges, attorneys, space in order to process these things more quickly and expeditiously.

So the bottom line is, actually, that there's nothing that the Governor indicated he'd like to see that I have a philosophical objection to. I've asked Jeh Johnson to contact his head of Health and Human Services when he comes down for the sixth time at the end of this week to coordinate and make sure that some of the suggestions that the Governor has are technically feasible and what kind of resources might be needed. But what I emphasized to the Governor was the problem here is not a major disagreement around the actions that could be helpful in dealing with the problem. The challenge is, is Congress prepared to act to put the resources in place to get this done?

Another way of putting it—and I said this directly to the Governor—is, are folks more interested in politics, or are they more interested in solving the problem? If they're interested in solving the problem, then this can be solved. If the preference is for politics, then it won't be solved.

And I urged the Governor to talk to the Texas delegation, which is obviously at the heart of the Republican caucus both in the House and has great influence in the caucus in the Senate. If the Texas delegation is in favor of this supplemental—which, by the way, does not include some things that I know many of them object to around dealing with undocumented workers who have been in this country for quite some time; this is just a very narrow issue, this supplemental, in terms of dealing with the particular problem we have right now—if the Texas delegation is prepared to move, this thing can get done next week. And we can have more Border Patrol agents on the border, as the Governor has requested; we can shorten the timetables for processing these children or adults with children, as the Governor thinks is important; we can make sure that some of the public health issues that were raised in the

meeting that I just had are addressed so that we've got enough folks vaccinating and checking on the health status of these children to make sure that not only are they safe, but also our communities are safe.

The things that the Governor thinks are important to do would be a lot easier to do if we had this supplemental. It gives us the resources to do them. And so the only question at this point is, why wouldn't the Texas delegation or any of the other Republicans who are concerned about this not want to put this on a fast track and get this on my desk so I can sign it and we can start getting to work?

I suggested to the Governor, he has, I suspect, some influence over the Texas delegation, and that might be helpful to call on them to pass this supplemental right away.

The final point I'll make is, I just want to thank some of the faith-based groups that I just met with, as well as mayors, commissioners, local officials. Dallas has been incredibly compassionate in looking at some sites, some facilities in which they can accommodate some of these children. And I indicated in hearing the stories of churches that are prepared to not just make donations, but send volunteers to help to construct some of these facilities or fix them up, and their willingness to volunteer in providing care and assistance to these children, I told them thank you, because it confirmed what I think we all know, which is the American people are an incredibly compassionate people, and when we see a child in need, we want to care for them.

But what I think we all agreed on is, is that the best thing that we can do is to make sure that the children are able to live in their own countries safely. And that's why it's going to be important, even as we solve the short-term problem here, for us to be able to direct attention and resources and assistance—as we're doing, but not at a sustained and high enough level—back in Honduras and Guatemala and El Salvador and other places so that parents don't think that somehow it's safer for their children to send them thousands of miles just so that they don't get harmed.

With that, I'll take a couple of questions. Yes, go ahead.

Calls for the President To Visit the U.S.-Mexico Border/President's Meeting With Governor J. Richard Perry of Texas/Immigration Reform Legislation

Q. Mr. President, there are increasing calls not just from Republicans, but also for some Democrats for you to visit the border during this trip. Can you explain why you didn't do that? And do you see any legitimate reason for you to actually do that at some point, or do you think those calls are more about politics than anything else?

The President. Jeh Johnson has now visited, at my direction, the border five times. He's going for a sixth this week. He then comes back and reports to me extensively on everything that's taking place. So there's nothing that is taking place down there that I am not intimately aware of and briefed on.

This isn't theater, this is a problem. I'm not interested in photo ops; I'm interested in solving a problem. And those who say I should visit the border, when you ask them what should we be doing, they're giving us suggestions that are embodied in legislation that I've already sent to Congress. So it's not as if they're making suggestions that we're not listening to. In fact, the suggestions of those who work at the border, who visited the border, are incorporated in legislation that we're already prepared to sign the minute it hits my desk.

There's a very simple question here, and that is, Congress just needs to pass the supplemental. There is a larger issue that I recognize involves a lot of politics, which is, why aren't we passing comprehensive immigration reform, which would put an additional 20,000 Border Patrol agents and give us a lot of additional authorities to deal with some of these problems? That should have been done a year ago, should have been done 2 years ago. It's gotten caught up in politics. And I understand that.

One of the suggestions I had for Governor Perry was that it would be useful for my Republican friends to rediscover the concept of negotiation and compromise. The Governor's

one concern that he mentioned to me was, is that setting aside the supplemental, I should go ahead and authorize having National Guard troops surge at the border right away. And I—what I told him is, we're happy to consider how we could deploy National Guard down there, but that's a temporary solution, that's not a permanent solution. And so why wouldn't we go ahead and pass the permanent solution or at least a longer term solution? And if the Texas delegation said, for us to pass the supplemental, we want to include a commitment that you're going to send some National Guard early, we'd be happy to consider it.

So this should not be hard to at least get the supplemental done. The question is, are we more interested in politics, or are we more interested in solving the problem? If we're interested in solving the problem, then there's actually some broad consensus around a number of the issues. There may be some controversies and differences between Democrats and Republicans on some of the policy issues, but on a whole bunch of this stuff, there's some pretty broad consensus. Let's just get that done. Let's do the work.

The President's Meeting With Governor J. Richard Perry of Texas/Immigration Reform Legislation

Q. Mr. President, did the Governor give any indication that he would ask the Texas delegation to get behind the supplemental? And it sounds like you are concerned that this supplemental will fall victim to partisan politics.

The President. Well the, I think it's fair to say that these days in Washington, everybody is always concerned about everything falling victim to partisan politics. If I sponsored a bill declaring apple pie American, it might fall victim to partisan politics. I get that.

On the other hand, this is an issue in which my Republican friends have said it's urgent and we need to fix it. And if that's the case, then let's go ahead and fix it.

As I indicated to Governor Perry—he suggested, well, maybe you just need to go ahead and act and that might convince Republicans that they should go ahead and pass the supplemental. And I had to remind him I'm getting sued right now by Mr. Boehner, apparently, for going ahead and acting instead of going through Congress. Well, here's a good test case. This is something you say is important, as I do. This is an area that you have prioritized, as I have. Don't wait for me to take executive actions if—when you have the capacity right now to go ahead and get something done. I will sign that bill tomorrow. We're going to go ahead and do what we can administratively, but this gives us the tools to do many of the very things that Republicans are seeking.

At the same time, I will just repeat that if we got a comprehensive bill done, it doesn't just solve this problem for a year, it solves it potentially for 20 years. And I would urge those who, who so far at least, have failed to act on the comprehensive bill to take another look at it.

Q. So it didn't sound like he made any promises then.

The President. I didn't get any promises, but it was a constructive conversation. And I just want to emphasize that I think that it was a good exchange of ideas. And he did have some specific suggestions in terms of how we align border agents that I've asked Jeh Johnson to take a look at, because I think there may be ways in which we can use the resources that we already have more effectively than we're currently doing. And I think it is important that we make sure we've got a strong Federal-State collaboration on the issue.

I'm going to take just two more questions, then I've got to get going. Go ahead.

The President's Meeting With Governor J. Richard Perry of Texas/Immigration Reform Legislation

Q. Mr. President, Governor Perry put out a statement shortly before you spoke, saying that he "pressed"—his verb—you to secure the border.

The President. Yes.

Q. Does that statement in any way indicate that he's interested in compromise?

The President. I'm interested in securing the border. So, as I explained, as far as I could tell, the only disagreement I had with Governor Perry was, is that he wanted me to go ahead

and do it without Congress having to do anything.

We'll do what we can administratively. I think the useful question not simply for the Governor, but for John Boehner and Mitch McConnell and the other members of the Texas delegation is why wouldn't you go ahead and pass a bill to give us additional resources to solve the very problem that you say is urgent?

Jackie [Jackie Calmes, New York Times].

Child Migration From Central America to the U.S./Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Policy/Immigration Reform Legislation

Q. Mr. President, there's been a number of Republicans who have said that DACA, the deferred action Executive order from 2012 that you signed, is to blame, that it was an invitation——

The President. Right.

Q. ——that these other children are now taking up on. What do you say to that?

The President. If you look at the pattern of immigration into our country, we are at actually a significantly lower level in terms of overall immigration flow—illegal immigration flow than we were when I took office.

I think that the challenge we have that has really caused a spike is the significant security challenges in these Central American countries themselves and the fact that you've got smugglers who are increasingly recognizing that they can make money by transporting these folks, often in very dangerous circumstances, to the border and taking advantage of the compassion of the American people, recognizing that we're not going to simply leave abandoned children who are left at our doorstep, but that we've got to care for them and provide them some basic safety and security while we determine where we can send them.

But I think one of the most important things that we're going to have to recognize—this is not going to be a short-term problem, this is a long-term problem—we have countries that are pretty close to us in which the life chances of children are just far, far worse than they are here. And parents who are frightened or are misinformed about what's possible are willing to take extraordinary risks on behalf of their kids. The more that we can do to help these countries get their acts together, then the less likely we are to have a problem at the borders.

And the fact of the matter is, is that DACA and comprehensive immigration reform generally would allow us to reallocate resources precisely because all the budget of DHS, instead of us chasing after families that may have been living here for 5 or 10 years and have kids who are U.S. citizens and are law abiding, save for the fact that they didn't come here legally, if they have to earn citizenship, paying taxes, learning English, paying a fine, going to the back of the line, but they are no longer a enforcement priority, that suddenly frees up a huge amount of resources to do exactly the kinds of things that many Republicans have been calling for us to do and that we've tried to within the resource limitations that we have.

All right? Thank you, everybody. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. at Dallas Love Field airport. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson; and Texas Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner Kyle L. Janek.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner in Dallas

July 9, 2014

Well, to the whole Stanley family, because we've got a whole crew here, I want to say thank you. Marc and Wendy have just been great friends for such a long time and great supporters not just to me, but of good causes here in Texas and all across the country, and we couldn't ask for better friends. And we're really thankful to all of them.

And Marc is entirely right to say that my greatest accomplishments as President had to

do with having a great Speaker of the House, and I want her back with her hand on the gavel. She is tough, she is smart, and she has a heart as big as Texas, even though she's from California. [*Laughter*] Nancy Pelosi.

I want to spend most of the time in conversation, so I'm not going to make a long speech at the front end. Let me offer just a simple proposition. I'm not running for reelection. [*Laughter*] Not just because of the Constitution, but also because of my wife. [*Laughter*] And so I think I can say this not because I'm trying to get votes, but simply to state the facts. There's almost no economic measure by which we are not better off now than we were when I took office. And let me—just in case folks are wondering, let me just make sure everybody is clear. When I came into office, Nancy was Speaker, and we were facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Actually, the contraction was larger, we now know, than during the initial stages of the Great Depression.

And because of the incredible resilience of the American people, but because we made some smart decisions very early on, tough decisions, what we have now seen is 52 straight months of job growth, 10 million jobs created; unemployment rate is the lowest it has been since September of 2008, before I was elected. This first 6 months of the year, we've seen the fastest job growth since 1999. Manufacturing job growth, highest since the nineties. Deficit, been cut by more than half. The uninsurance—the number of uninsured has dropped because of the Affordable Care Act. Health care inflation is the slowest it's been in 50 years. Energy production has gone off the charts. We are now producing more oil than we import for the first time in a very long time. Solar power we've increased by 10 times, wind power by 3 times. We've reduced our carbon footprint faster than just about any industrialized country in the world. Our dropout rate has gone down; Latino dropout rate has been cut by more than half. College attendance rates are the highest they've ever been.

So, on measure after measure—the auto industry comes surging back; we passed legislation that firms up the financial system, but also makes sure that if companies take excessive bets now, they're the ones left holding the tab instead of taxpayers. So, by all outward appearances, we are indisputably better off than when I was elected, in part because we took some really tough decisions early.

But what's also true is, is that people are anxious out there. Part of it is still feeling traumatized by the crisis and the scale of it and people seeing their housing values plummet and the stock market taking a hit. And even though the stock market is at record highs now and housing has recovered, people still feel things are a little more fragile. And they had to go through a lot of deleveraging, getting rid of excess debt.

But a lot of it also just has to do with the fact that as things improve, a basic trend that's been going on for quite some time continues, which is wages, incomes of ordinary folks not going up even though productivity is going up, corporate profits are going up. The average person still feels, no matter how hard I work, I don't feel like I'm getting ahead the way I should, and I'm worried about the next generation and whether my child or grandchild is going to have the same opportunities that I have.

The good news is, we actually know what to do about it. We know that if we increase the minimum wage, millions of people would benefit. We know that if we pass equal pay for equal work legislation, that that's going to help not just women, it's going to help families, because when women succeed, America succeeds. We know that we've got $2 trillion worth of deferred maintenance to our infrastructure. We could put people back to work all across the country—and those jobs can't be exported—rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our ports, our airports.

If we implemented a plan that's been sitting on the shelf for lack of funding, but is technically feasible right now, to redo our whole air traffic control system, we would reduce the fuel that airlines need by 30 percent, which, with corresponding benefits to the environment, those savings could then be passed on to

customers. Delays at airports would be drastically reduced.

We know that early childhood education gives you a $7 benefit for every dollar you invest and would also help alleviate the challenges of childcare. I was in Minnesota with a young woman who had written me a letter, just a wonderful woman. Her husband had lost a job in construction. He's a carpenter, worked for a railway at drastically reduced pay. She went back to school even though she had a small child, became an accountant. Together, they dug themselves out of debt. She's doing pretty well now, but she says, you know, I'm paying $2,000 for my two little boys a month in childcare costs; there's no way we can get ahead. We could help her. We could help all these young people.

Yesterday, in Denver, a young person—a young woman, math major, what you want to see, excelling in school, but she's worried about the kind of debt she is accruing. There is legislation right now in the Senate and the House that would allow young people to be able to consolidate and refinance their debt, save themselves thousands of dollars. We know things that would work.

And there's one reason they're not happening. And that is, is that you've got a Republican Party right now, particularly House Republicans, whose only agenda seems to be to say no. They say no to minimum wage, they say no to fair pay, no to extending unemployment benefits and, so far, no to just renewing the highway trust fund so people don't get laid off of the projects that are already going on. And of course, no to immigration reform.

So I enjoyed meeting with Governor Perry. And by the way, he had some suggestions that I said I actually agree with, which is why they're in the supplemental bill that I just sent to Congress. [*Laughter*] Why don't you get the Texas Republican delegation to pass it. Because the question is, are we interested in political gamesmanship, or are we actually trying to solve a problem? And the problem we have right now is, is that there's just a lot of political positioning, but there's a big, fat zero when it comes to action on the part of these folks to try to solve the problems that are on the minds of the American people right now.

Now, I always say, Democrats are not perfect. There are times where we've got our own ideological blind spots. There are times where we don't act as boldly as we should on issues that are important, but tough politically. Everybody in Washington, they have to be reelected, and sometimes, it takes the public a while to get to places even when it's the right thing to do. And so Democrats aren't perfect. And by the way, my favorite President happened to be the first Republican President, a guy named Abraham Lincoln. [*Laughter*]

But right now, at this moment in our history, the reason we're not making progress is because you've got a party on the other side that has become so ideologically rigid, so invested in an economic theory that says if folks at the top do well and there are no regulations on banks or insurance companies or credit card companies or polluters, that somehow everybody does well. You've got a party that is so invested in obstruction than compromise and producing on behalf of the American people that truthfully this is not an issue of "a plague on both your houses."

Democrats are prepared to act on behalf of middle class families and their concerns. We're prepared to do hard things on behalf of that young woman who needs help on childcare and on behalf of that young woman who needs help on her college education. And we're willing to do some tough things on behalf of making sure that we have secure borders as well as making sure that we've got a smarter system of legal immigration and that we lift people out of the shadows who have lived here, oftentimes, for a very long time.

We're prepared to do tough things. And we'd love to have a partner on the other side. But we don't right now. And that means that the American people are going to have to call to question, and they're going to have to say to the other side, you know what, if you guys don't have a single idea to help us on anything and you can't compromise on anything, and the only thing you've produced during the 4 years that you've been in power is a Govern-

ment shutdown and us coming to the brink of defaulting for the first time in 200 years and affecting the full faith and credit of the American people—if that's all you've got to offer, well, maybe you need to reflect for a while on why it is that you're in politics and what public service means.

So we've got one problem, and the problem is cynicism. The problem is, Democrats congenitally vote at lower rates during midterms because of gerrymandering—you know something about that here in Texas—and population distribution. Even though, on every issue, we enjoy a majority position, the House Republicans don't have to respond to that. They're responding to their primary Tea Party voters. Nothing happens, that makes our folks even more cynical, we're less likely to vote, and you get this vicious spiral where there's a lot of cynicism and a lot of unhappiness, but nothing changes.

And the reason I hope everybody is here today is because we actually can change that, but we can only change it if we feel some urgency about this midterm election. I want an effective, successful Republican Party. I want a loyal opposition. But the only way that the message is sent that you've got to do some commonsense things and act based on facts and reason as opposed to politics and ideology is if they have a sense that people are paying attention and that voters vote. And that's where the DCCC, it's got its work cut out for it, but it can do it because we're on the right side of this.

We've got to work hard. You've got to work not just—we don't have to just work as hard as we did during the Presidential election, we've got to work harder. And I know nobody is working harder than Nancy Pelosi. And I'm working hard. I need you all to work hard. And if you do, then we can deliver on behalf of all those folks who write me letters every single day, because they're good people, and they feel hopeful. But they need a little help, and I want to give it to them, and Nancy wants to give it to them, and I know you do too.

Thanks. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:40 p.m. at the residence of Marc R. and Wendy Stanley. In his remarks, he referred to St. Anthony, MN, resident Rebekah Erler, her husband Ben Erler, and their sons Jack and Henry; and Elizabeth Cooper, student, University of Northern Colorado. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Austin, Texas
July 9, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Good to see you. Good to be here. Good to be here. Thank you.

Well, first of all, it's just good to be back in Austin—love this town. Love Austin, Texas. I do. I remember the first fundraiser I had down here in Austin when I was running for the U.S. Senate, and it was around this time of year. It was so hot that when I was done, I had to get rid of the shirt. [*Laughter*] It just never recovered. [*Laughter*]

The last time I took a walk unencumbered was in Austin, Texas. True story. This is before a debate in the primary. And I walked along the river, and I got about probably a mile, mile and a half, and then some people started spotting me so that by the time—Secret Service got nervous, and then by the time we got back, there was a big rope line, and there was all the fuss. And I have wistful memories of that walk. [*Laughter*]

And I remember going to a bar or club, honky-tonk around here, and singing on stage. [*Laughter*] I wasn't very good, but people were enthusiastic anyway. I've had really good barbecue here. But most importantly, I just love the people of Austin. They're just good people. I forget, I actually got down into the Longhorn Stadium and tossed the football with Colt and Coach Brown. Every time I come here, I have fun. And tonight is no exception because we are in an extraordinary setting.

I'm going to use my creativity by taking off my jacket. And perhaps if the press wasn't here, I'd be creative and jump in the pool.

[*Laughter*] But the pool report might reflect bad judgment on my part. [*Laughter*] There's a fine line between creativity and bad judgment. [*Laughter*] You want your President to be on the right side of that line. So, taking off the jacket, creative. Jumping in the pool, bad judgment. [*Laughter*]

Obviously, I want to thank Robert and Marci for making this incredible setting available and congratulate Robert on all the great work that he is doing on the new network and shows and the way that he is broadening, I think, everybody's imaginations about what America is about and what it looks like, what it sounds like.

I want to acknowledge a dear friend who has really been working hard on behalf of Democrats all across the country, and he is one of your own: Henry Muñoz is here. We're very, very proud of Henry. There he is. In addition to just being one of the finest people I know and a great friend, he's also very stylish, so I would advise people to take a look at his shoes before you leave and then see if you could pull it off. [*Laughter*]

I've been doing a lot of stuff today. I was in Denver to start with, and then I was in Dallas, hanging out with your Governor. [*Laughter*] And then I'm ending up in Austin. My message has been consistent, I think, throughout this day and throughout this trip and throughout my Presidency. What makes America special is the idea that no matter what you look like, where you come from, who you love, what your last name is, what manner you worship the Sacred, that you can make it here if you try. If you work hard, you can make it.

And when I came into office, we were in the midst of the worst crisis since the Great Depression. And because of the resilience of the American people and the creativity of the American people, we pulled ourselves out of it.

And also because my administration made some good decisions early that were tough and not always popular, we've now seen 52 straight months of job growth, 10 million jobs created, unemployment rate the lowest it's been since September of 2008. First half of this year, jobs have grown faster than any time since 1999. We saved an auto industry, stabilized the financial system, put in place laws to make sure that predatory lending and some of the practices that got us into this mess in the first place don't happen again.

We've lowered the rate of uninsured through the Affordable Care Act, and we've actually slowed the pace at which health care inflation increases, which is good for families and good for businesses. We've cut the deficit by more than half. We have seen a lowering of the dropout rate; it's been cut in half for Latino students. We've seen the highest college attendance rate in history. Our energy market is booming. We're producing more oil than we're importing for the first time in a lot of years. We've tripled the amount of wind energy, increased by tenfold the amount of solar energy, lowered our carbon pollution.

It used to be before I came into office that China was determined as the best place to invest among the world's investors and companies. The United States is now back where it belongs as the number-one country to invest and we're actually seeing manufacturing come back to the United States.

So the point is that we've made some remarkable progress. The stock market is at an alltime high, and obviously, that benefits a lot of folks at the very top, but anybody who has a 401(k) has seen their retirement savings exceed where they were before I came into office and before the crash. We've seen housing begin to recover. We've made a lot of progress.

But the reason we're here is we know we've got so much more to do. And there is anxiety around the country and worry. And the reason there is anxiety and the reason there is worry is because so much of the gains that we've made have gone to folks at the top. Ordinary folks haven't seen much of an increase in terms of their wages, their incomes. There are families that work really hard every single day, do the right thing, are responsible, but at the end of the month, it's tough paying the bills. There are young people who are dying to go to college, but aren't sure that they can afford it. There are still folks who are desperate for work, but find perhaps because they got laid

off at the age of 50 or 55 that folks aren't willing to hire them anymore.

We still have millions of people around the country who are our neighbors and our friends and the friends of our children, but who are still living in the shadows because we haven't passed immigration reform. There are children who are still in schools that aren't teaching them, and they're going to have a real hard time finding ladders into the middle class.

So we know that we've got more work to do. Now, the good news is we also know what we could be doing about it. We know that if we invest in infrastructure—rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our ports and our airports and creating smart grids and new ways to transmit energy—that all this would create jobs right now in the United States and increase our economic growth and set the course for future economic growth.

We know that if we pass immigration reform, it's not just good for the families, it's good for the economy. We attract the best and the brightest; they invest here, they create jobs. It's estimated that it would cut our deficit and the economy would grow by more than an extra trillion dollars. We know these things.

We know if we invest in basic research and technology that we'll keep our edge and the dynamism of the U.S. economy, which has always been our advantage, that the pace of growth will accelerate. We know that if we invest in early childhood education, that every dollar we invest helping a child get a good start means they're less likely to drop out, more likely to go to college, less likely to have a teen pregnancy, less likely to go to jail. We know it's a good investment.

So we know what to do. The problem is that Washington is not working the way it's supposed to. And that's part of the reason people feel anxious, because they're thinking to themselves, we could be there, we could be making progress. People sense—they may not follow all the intricacies of the debates that go on, what passes for debates in Washington, but they know we could be doing better than we're doing right now if folks were acting on behalf of middle class families and people who are striving to get into the middle class, if folks were showing a seriousness of purpose as opposed to worrying about getting reelected or posturing on television.

They know that. And so what I've said to my team is, get me out of Washington. [*Laughter*] Let me talk to people who are doing the right thing and struggling so that they know they're being heard by at least somebody in Washington. Let's remind the country what we should be focused on. So that we can also maybe prod Congress into doing the right thing. Now——

Audience member. Good luck.

The President. Well, I don't need luck, I need work. Because the challenge we've got—and I said this earlier today, and I'm going to keep on saying it—I'm not actually—I wasn't raised sharply partisan. My mom, she had good old-fashioned liberal, progressive values, but she wasn't involved in politics. And my favorite President is a Republican named Abraham Lincoln. And so my attitude is that, historically, both parties have done really important work. You have Teddy Roosevelt, a Republican, started the national parks, and Dwight Eisenhower build the Interstate Highway System, and Richard Nixon started the EPA. There have been historically some great Republicans and some great Democrats who have helped lead this country in a good direction. And for a big stretch of time, they've been able to work together on important projects.

But right now, at this moment, the reason Washington doesn't work is very simple: You've got one party whose main goal seems just to say no. Say no to immigration reform. Say no to raising the minimum wage. Say no to extending unemployment benefits for folks who are out there looking for work, but can't find it. Say no to equal pay for equal work. Don't just say no to doing something about climate change, just deny climate change. And definitely say no to me.

And so you don't get a sense that you've got a party that's serious about trying to do anything when it comes to the challenges that are facing the middle class. It's not just that they have a different theory about how to help, they just don't seem to have any theory at all—other

than saying no, or a theory that says we're going to help—or just allow folks at the very top to do whatever the heck they want and somehow prosperity is going to trickle down onto everybody else.

And that's, hopefully, why you are here, because that is not inevitable. The American people agree with us on minimum wage. They agree with us on equal pay for equal work. They agree with us on immigration reform. They agree that we should be doing more to help young people go to college. Across the board, on the issues, the American people agree with us. So why is it Congress isn't working and the Republican Party can't seem to respond? It's because, especially in midterms, half of us don't vote.

And so the reason we are here today is just to remind everybody—here we don't have to be that creative—that if people participate and feel a sense of urgency and channel the frustration people feel constructively into these midterm elections, then we can get a Congress that's responsive, which doesn't mean that we have to do everything that I think we should do; I'm willing to compromise.

I told Rick Perry today, I said, I'm happy to listen to your ideas, but right now the main problem I've got with respect to these unaccompanied children is, I've just put forward a piece of legislation before Congress that would give us the resources to care for them and help deal with the borders, all the things you say you want, Governor, and somehow, I haven't heard yet from the Republican delegation of Texas to say this is such an urgent problem that they're going to move this quickly and get it done. So, if you can't even do the things you say you want to do, how are we going to get anything done?

So we've got to feel a sense of urgency. And if we do, Congress can change. And if Congress changes, then America can change in ways that we all hope for, not just for ourselves, but for our kids and our grandkids.

But we've got to feel a sense of urgency about it not just during Presidential elections, but during midterms. And all of you are going to be critical in that endeavor. So I hope you'll join me. Do not get cynical. Cynics didn't send men to the Moon. Cynics did not liberate slaves. Cynics did not transform this country. Folks who are hopeful and creative did. And that's what we've got to constantly remember, we've got to guard against cynicism, embrace hope, work hard. If we do, we're going to be able to deliver the kind of Congress that the American people deserve.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 p.m. at the residence of Robert Rodriguez. In his remarks, he referred to Colt McCoy, quarterback, National Football League's Washington Redskins, in his former capacity as quarterback of the University of Texas at Austin football team; Mack Brown, former head coach, University of Texas at Austin football team; and Marci Madison, girlfriend of Mr. Rodriguez. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Austin, Texas
July 10, 2014

The President. Hello, Austin! Hey! Hello, Austin! All right, everybody, have a seat, have a seat. It's good to be in Austin, Texas. Can everybody please give Kinsey a big round of applause for the great introduction?

Audience member. We love you!

The President. That's because I love you. I—everybody knows I love Austin, Texas. Every time I come here I tell you how much I love you. I love Austin. I love the people. I love the barbecue, which I will get right after this. [*Laughter*] I like the music. I've got good memories here; I've got good friends.

I was telling somebody that the last time I walked, a real walk, where I was kind of left alone was in Austin, Texas. Right before the debate here during the primary in 2007, 2008? It must have been 2008. And I was walking along the river, and nobody noticed me, and I felt great. [*Laughter*] And then, on the way

back, somebody did notice me, and Secret Service started coming around and—[*laughter*]—but that first walk was really good. So let's face it, I just love Austin. Love the people of Austin.

I want to thank a proud Texan, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, for being here today. We appreciate her.

It is great to play at the Paramount. I think I finally made it. I finally arrived. I've enjoyed the last couple of days, just getting out of Washington. And we started in Colorado, in Denver, and then went to Dallas and then came down here. And at each stop, I've been able to just meet people and talk about people's lives, their hopes, their dreams.

I just had some coffee, as Kinsey may have mentioned, at the Magnolia Cafe, which was very nice. It was fun too because I had a chance to—there were a bunch of folks there, and some EMT folks were there on their break after their shift, and there were a group of high school kids who were getting together. They were about to go on a 2-week-long service trip to Peru, which, by the way, reminds you, you should be optimistic whenever you meet young people because they're full of energy and idealism. And so they were going to do this service trip, and they were going to go for 2 days, then, to Machu Picchu, the old Inca ruins in Peru. And I said, I always wanted to go there. And they said, well, you can come with us if you want. [*Laughter*] And I said, I'm really tempted, but I think there are some things I've got to do. [*Laughter*]

But I got them—in exchange for a selfie with them, they promised that they would send me a picture of them when they get there. So I'm going to hold them to it. We got their e-mail, and if I don't get it, I'll be upset. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, so I was talking to Kinsey because she wrote me a letter and I wanted to reply in person. Because, as some of you may know, every day, we get tens of thousands of letters or correspondence, e-mails at the White House. And ever since—of the first day I was in office, what I've asked our Correspondence Office to do is to select 10 of them for me to read every night. And in these letters, people tell me their stories. They talk about losing a job or finding a job. They talk about trying to finance a college education. They talk about challenges because maybe they're the children of immigrants, and they're worried about their status. They talk about the hardships they're going through, successes they had, things they hope for, things that they're afraid of when it comes to the future and their lives.

Sometimes, people say thank you for something I've done or a position I've taken, and some people say, "You're an idiot." [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Wrong!

The President. And that's how I know that I'm getting a good representative sampling because—[*laughter*]—half the letters are less than impressed with me.

So Kinsey wrote me to tell me about her family. Her mom was a preschool teacher, her dad was an engineer. Together, obviously, they worked really hard, raised a family. They were responsible, did all the right things, were able to put their kids through college. Then they lost their jobs. And because they lost their jobs as midcareer persons, a lot of their résumés didn't get answered. And their savings started to dwindle. And Kinsey works to pay for school, but it's not enough.

And she told me that she's always been passionate about politics and the issues of the day, but after last year's Government shutdown, all this stuff has happened with her family, it doesn't seem like anybody in Washington is thinking about them. She wrote: "I became a disgruntled citizen. I felt as if my Government, my beloved Government that's supposed to look out for the needs of all Americans had failed me. My parents have always supported my siblings and me," she wrote, "now it's my turn to help them. I want to be involved. President Obama, what can I do?"

So I wanted to meet with Kinsey to let her know that I had heard her, that I listened to what was happening with her family and I was thinking about her parents and I was thinking about her and her sisters. And I'm here today because of Kinsey. And I'm here today because of every American who is working their tail off and does everything right and who believes in the American Dream and just wants a chance

to build a decent life for themselves and their families.

And you and folks like Kinsey are the reason I ran for President in the first place, because your lives are the lives that I lived. When I listen to Kinsey, I think about me and Michelle trying to finance our college education. When I think about somebody who didn't have health care, I think about my mom when she had cancer that would ultimately end her life at about the age I am now. When I think about equal pay, I think about my grandmother working her way up at a bank with nothing but a high school education and becoming the vice president of the bank, but always being kind of passed over for the next stage by men who were less qualified than she was.

So the stories that I hear in these letters, they're my story, and they're Michelle's story, and they're the story that we had before I became Senator: worrying about childcare, trying to figure out how to have a balanced life so that if your—Malia or Sasha got sick we could take time off and how do you manage all that.

So that's why these letters are so important to me. And that's why whenever I'm out of Washington, part of what I want to do is just to remember and to connect with your stories so that you know that what I'm trying to do every single day is based on that experience.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. And when I see—[*applause*]—and when you see the trajectory of Kinsey's family, in some ways, it's a little bit a story of what's happened to America.

The crisis in 2008 hurt us all badly, worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. But you think about the progress we've made. Today, our businesses have added nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. Our housing is rebounding. Our auto industry is booming. Manufacturing is adding more jobs than any time since the 1990s. The unemployment rate is the lowest point it's been since September of 2008. Kinsey's dad found a new job that he loves in a field—in the field he was trained for. So a lot of this had—was because of the resilience and hard work of the American people. That's what happens. Americans bounce back.

But some of it had to do with decisions we made to build our economy on a new foundation. And those decisions are paying off. We're more energy independent. For the first time in nearly 20 years, we produce more oil here at home than we buy from abroad. The world's largest oil and gas producer isn't Russia, it's not Saudi Arabia, it's the United States of America.

At the same time, we've reduced our total carbon pollution over the past 8 years more than any country on Earth. We have tripled the amount of electricity we generate from wind. We've increased the amount of solar energy we have by 10 times. We're creating jobs across the country in clean energy.

In education, our high school graduation rate is at a record high; the Latino dropout rate has been cut in half since 2000. More young people are graduating from college than ever before.

Audience member. Sí, se puede!

The President. Sí, se peude. [*Laughter*]

The Affordable Care Act has given millions more families peace of mind. They won't go broke just because they get sick. Our deficit has been cut by more than half.

We have come farther and recovered faster, thanks to you——

Audience member. Thanks to you!

The President. ——than just about any other nation on Earth. And so we've got a lot to be encouraged by, just as the story of Kinsey's family makes us feel more encouraged. For the first time in a decade, business leaders around the world have said the number-one place to invest is not China, it's the United States of America. So we're actually seeing companies bring jobs back. So there's no doubt that we are making progress. By almost every measure, we are better off now than we were when I took office.

But the fact is, we've still got a long way to go. We've still got a long way to go, because while we're creating more jobs faster these first 6 months of this year than any time since 1999, we know there are still a lot of folks out there who are looking for work or looking for more

full-time work or looking for a better paying job. Corporate profits are higher than ever. CEOs make more than ever. But you're working harder than ever just to get by and pay the bills.

So, as a whole, the country is doing better. But the problem is, is that so much of the improved productivity and profits have gone to the folks at the very top, and the average person, their wages and incomes haven't really gone up at all, and in some cases, haven't kept up with the rising cost of health care or college or all the basic necessities that people need.

And so, Austin, I'm here to say that this country is not going to succeed if just a few are doing well. This country succeeds when everybody has got a shot. The country does better when the middle class does better and when there are more ladders of opportunity into the middle class. That's the kind of economy that works here in America. And that's what's at stake right now.

That's why we're fighting for an opportunity agenda that creates more good jobs and creates more good wages, jobs in American manufacturing, jobs in construction. We should be rebuilding infrastructure all across America, putting people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools, creating a smart grid to transmit clean energy across the country more efficiently.

We can create good jobs in American energy and——

[*At this point, the President sneezed.*]

The President. ——bless you—and innovation. [*Laughter*] I'm okay, I'm just—just haven't had enough sleep. [*Laughter*]

We're fighting for an opportunity agenda that trains more workers with the skills to fill the jobs that are being created. I was talking to some folks from a community college before I came out here. We've learned that if we reach out to businesses and help them design the training programs in the community colleges, then when somebody finishes that training, they know they can get a job right away.

We're fighting for an opportunity agenda that guarantees every child gets a world-class education from the time that they are 3 until the time that they graduate from college.

We're fighting for an opportunity agenda that makes sure your hard work pays off with higher wages and equal pay for equal work and workplace flexibility and overtime pay that you've earned.

We're fighting for opportunity for all and the idea that no matter who you are and what you look like and where you come from and who you love, if you work hard in America, if you work hard in Austin, if you work hard in Texas, you can make it here. [*Applause*] You can make it.

So that's what we're working for. And the good news is, is that the things that we need to do are well within our capabilities, our grasp. We know we can—we know how to build roads. We know how to put people back to work on infrastructure. We know that if we invest in early childhood education, every dollar we put in, we get $7 back, and fewer dropouts and fewer teen pregnancies and fewer folks going into the criminal justice system.

We know that if we do some basic things, if we make some basic changes, we'll see more jobs, faster economic growth, lift more incomes, strengthen the middle class. They are commonsense things. They're not that radical. We know it's what we should be doing. And what drives me nuts—and I know drives you nuts—is Washington isn't doing it.

And let me be clear about why Washington is broken, because sometimes, everybody says, well, you know what, all politicians are the same, all the parties—the Democrats, Republicans, it doesn't matter, it's all—look, Democrats are not perfect, I promise you. [*Laughter*] I know a lot of them. [*Laughter*] And yes, every Member of Congress, they're thinking about, I'd like to be reelected, and I'd like to keep my job. That's human nature. We all understand that. But let me be clear. On the commonsense agenda that would help middle class families, the overwhelming number of Democrats are in favor of these things.

They're in favor of minimum wage. They're in favor of equal pay. They're in favor of extending unemployment benefits. They're in

favor of infrastructure. They're in favor of investing in research and development. They're in favor of making college more affordable. They've got specific proposals. They're willing to compromise. They're prepared to go forward.

So when you—when folks say they're frustrated with Congress, let's be clear about what the problem is. I'm just telling the truth now. I don't have to run for office again, so I can just, you know, let her rip. And I want to assure you, I'm really not that partisan of a guy. My favorite President is the first Republican President, a guy named Abraham Lincoln. You look at our history, and we had great Republican Presidents who—like, Teddy Roosevelt started the National Park System, and Dwight Eisenhower built the Interstate Highway System, and Richard Nixon started the EPA.

This is—the statement I'm making is not a partisan statement, it is a statement of fact. So far this year, Republicans in Congress have blocked or voted down every serious idea to strengthen the middle class. They have said no——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo now, because what I wanted you to do is vote.

They've said no to raising the minimum wage. They've said no to fair pay. They said no to unemployment insurance for hard-working folks like Kinsey's parents who have paid taxes all their lives and never depended on anything and just needed a little help to get over a hump. They said no to fixing our broken immigration system that we know would strengthen our borders and our businesses and help families.

Instead of investing in education that helps working families, they voted to give another massive tax cut to the wealthiest Americans. Instead of creating jobs by rebuilding our infrastructure, our roads, our bridges, our ports that help every business, they've decided to protect tax loopholes for companies that are shifting jobs overseas and profits overseas.

The best thing you can say about this Congress—the Republicans in Congress, and particularly the House of Representatives—the best you can say for them this year is that so far they have not shut down the Government or threatened to have America welch on our obligations and ruin our credit rating. That's the best you can say. But of course, it's only July, so who knows what they may cook up in the next few months. [*Laughter*]

So, even as they're blocking policies that would help middle class families, they keep on offering these theories of the economy that have failed over and over again. They say, well, if we give more tax cuts to folks at the top that's going to be good. If we make fewer investments in things like education, everything will work out. If we loosen the rules for big banks and credit card companies and polluters and insurers, somehow, that's going to make the economy better. If we shrink the safety net and cut Medicaid and cut food stamps and make sure that folks who are vulnerable and trying to get back on their feet suffer more hardship, somehow, that's going to improve the economy.

Now, they believe these things—sincerely, I assume—that if they—if we do these things, if we just take care of folks at the top, or at least if we don't empower our Government to be able to help anybody, that somehow jobs and prosperity will trickle down and we'll all be better off.

And that may work just fine for folks at the top. It worked fine for me. I don't need Government. [*Laughter*] I mean, the—Michelle and I now are in a position where we can pretty much finance Malia and Sasha's college education. But I remember when Michelle's parents couldn't; they needed help. And I don't know about you, but I don't believe in pulling up the ladder once I'm up. I believe in extending it down and making sure that everybody has a chance to climb up.

The status quo certainly works for the special interests in Washington who like things just as they are. They'll be fine whether Congress ever passes a bill again or not. But it doesn't help you. It doesn't help your neighbors. It doesn't help your friends. It doesn't help your communities.

And what it does, is it just feeds people's cynicism about Washington. It just makes peo-

ple think, well, nothing can happen, and people start feeling hopeless. And we have to understand, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary in Washington, we can do better than we're doing right now. [*Applause*] We can do better than what we're doing right now.

We know from our history, our economy does not grow from the top down, it grows from the middle up. It grows from a rising, thriving middle class. It grows when we've got ladders of opportunity for everybody and every young person in America is feeling hopeful and has a chance to do what they can with the God-given talents that they have. That's what we're fighting for. That is what you should be fighting for.

And I will always look—I'll always look for ways to get Republicans and Democrats together in this effort. But I'm not—I can't stand by with partisan gridlock that's the result of cynical political games that threaten the hard work of millions of Americans. I'm not just going to stand by and say, okay, that's—I guess that's the way it is. Whenever and wherever I have the power, the legal authority to help families like yours, even if Congress is not doing anything, I will take that opportunity. I will try to make something happen.

And that's the reason why my administration has taken more than 40 different actions just this year to help working Americans: because Congress won't. Congress won't act to make sure a woman gets equal pay for equal work. So I made more women have the protections they need to fight for fair pay in the workplace, because I think when women succeed, America succeeds. So we went ahead and did that.

Congress won't act to create jobs in manufacturing or construction. Well, I went ahead and speeded up permits for big projects. We launched a new hub to attract more high-tech manufacturing jobs to America. I want to make sure the next revolution in manufacturing is right here in America; it's an American revolution, not a German or a Chinese revolution. I want it happening right here in Austin, Texas.

Congress so far hasn't acted to help more young people manage their student loan debt. So I acted with my lawful authority to give nearly 5 million Americans the chance to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their income so they can manage it better, so that if they go into teaching or they go into social work or they're doing something in a non-for-profit, that they're not encumbered by mountains of debt. I don't want our future leaders saddled with debt before they start out in life.

And Republicans in Congress so far have refused to raise workers' wages with a higher minimum wage. So I acted to require that Federal contractors pay their employees a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour, which would give hundreds of thousands of workers a raise. I asked business owners and Governors and mayors and State legislators—anybody I could work with—do what you can on your own, I told them.

Since the first time I asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, Congress hasn't done anything, but 13 States have gone ahead and raised theirs. And by the way—this is important to remember, just because folks are always trying to run the okey-doke on you and—[*laughter*]—the States that have increased their minimum wages this year have seen higher job growth than the States that have not increased their minimum wages. And more and more business owners are choosing to lift wages for their workers because they understand that it's going to be good to have productive workers, loyal workers, invested workers.

Just yesterday, before I came down to Texas, when I was in Denver, I met with Carolyn Reed. She owns six Silver Mine sub shops. She started her own business. She was working at UPS and decided she wanted to be a business owner, got her first franchise. Her and her husband mortgaged their house. Eventually, they got an SBA loan. Now, she's got six stores. A wonderful woman. And today she decided to raise her hourly employees' wages to a minimum of $10.10 an hour. She just went ahead and did it on her own, because she realized that she'll have less turnover and she's going to have more productive workers.

As long as Congress will not increase wages for workers, I will go and talk to every business

in America if I have to. There's no denying a simple truth: America deserves a raise, and if you work full time in this country, you shouldn't live in poverty. That's something that we all believe.

Now, here's where it gets interesting. There are a number of Republicans in Congress, including a number in the Texas delegation, who are mad at me for taking these actions. They actually plan to sue me. [*Laughter*] Now, I don't know which things they find most offensive, me helping to create jobs or me raising wages or me easing the student loan burdens or me making sure women can find out whether they're getting paid the same as men for doing the same job. I don't know which of these actions really bug them. [*Laughter*]

The truth is, even with all the actions I've taken this year, I'm issuing Executive orders at the lowest rate in more than a hundred years. So it's not clear how it is that Republicans didn't seem to mind when President Bush took more executive actions than I did. Maybe it's just me they don't like. I don't know. Maybe there's some principle out there that I haven't discerned, that I haven't figure out. [*Laughter*] You hear some of them: "Sue him," "Impeach him." Really? [*Laughter*] Really? For what? You're going to sue me to do—for doing my job? Okay.

I mean, think about that. You're going to use taxpayer money to sue me for doing my job—[*laughter*]—while you don't do your job.

There's a great movie called "The Departed," a little violent for kids. But there's a scene in the movie where Mark Wahlberg—they're on a stakeout, and somehow the guy loses the guy that they're tracking. And Wahlberg is all upset and yelling at the guy. And the guy looks up, and he says, "Well, who are you?" And Wahlberg says: "I'm the guy doing my job. You must be the other guy." [*Laughter*] Sometimes, I feel like saying to these guys, I'm the guy doing my job, you must be the other guy.

Audience member. Obama, I love you!

The President. [*Laughter*] So, rather than wage another political stunt that wastes time, wastes taxpayers' money, I've got a better idea: Do something. If you're mad at me for helping people on my own, let's team up. Let's pass some bills. Let's help America together.

It is lonely, me just doing stuff. I'd love if the Republicans did stuff too. [*Laughter*] I mean, on immigration issues, we've got—and to their credit, there are some Republicans in the Senate who actually worked with Democrats, passed a bill, would strengthen the borders, would help make the system more fair and more just. But the House Republicans, they haven't even called the bill. They won't even take a vote on the bill. They don't have enough energy or organization or I don't know what to just even vote no on the bill. [*Laughter*] And then, they're mad at me for trying to do some things to make the immigration system work better. So it doesn't make sense.

Audience member. Obama! [*Inaudible*]

The President. So, I'm sorry, what are you yelling about now? Sit down, guys. I'm almost done. Come on, sit down. Now, I'll talk to you afterwards, I promise. I'll bring you back. I'm wrapping things up here.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. I understand. See, everybody is going to start—I'm on your side, man. Sit down, guys, we'll talk about it later, I promise.

So look, here's what we could do. We could do so much more—no, you don't have to escort them out. They'll sit down. I promise, I'll talk to you afterwards.

We could do so much more if Republicans in Congress would focus less on stacking the deck for those on the top and focus more on creating opportunity for everybody. And I want to work with them. I don't expect them to agree with me on everything, but at least agree with me on the things that you used to say you were for before I was for them.

You used to be for building roads and infrastructure. Nothing has changed. Let's go ahead and do it. Ronald Reagan passed immigration reform, and you love Ronald Reagan. Let's go ahead and do it.

I mean, what changed?

Audience member. They don't like us!

The President. I'm just saying. [*Laughter*] That's what made our country great, a sense of common purpose, a sense we're all in it togeth-

er as one Nation, as one people. We can debate the issues, we can have our differences, but let's do something. Let's rally around an economic patriotism that says, instead of giving more tax breaks to millionaires, let's give tax breaks to working families to help pay for childcare or college.

Instead of protecting tax loopholes that let corporations keep their profits overseas, let's put some of that money to work right here in the United States rebuilding America. We can rebuild our airports, create the next generation of good manufacturing jobs, make sure those are made in America.

Let's rally around a patriotism that says we're stronger as a nation when we cultivate the ingenuity and talent of every American and give every 4-year-old in America access to high-quality education, good-quality preschool. Let's redesign our high schools to make them more relevant to the 21st-century economy. Let's make college more affordable. Let's make sure every worker, if you lose your job, you can get a good job, training that gives you an even better job.

Let's embrace the patriotism that says it's a good thing when our fellow citizens have health care. It's not a bad thing. [*Applause*] That's not a bad thing. It's a good thing when women earn what men do for the same work. That's an all-American principle. Everybody has got a mom out there or a wife out there or a daughter out there. They don't want them to not get treated the—fairly. Why would you be against that?

It's a good thing when parents can take a day off to care for a sick child without losing their job or losing pay and they can't pay their bills at the end of the month. It's a good thing when nobody who works full time is living in poverty. That is not radical. It's not un-American. It's not socialist. That's how we built this country. It's what America is all about, us working together.

So let me just wrap up by saying this: The hardest thing to change in politics is a stubborn status quo. It's hard to—our democracy is designed where folks who have power, who have clout, they can block stuff, they can keep things as they are. It's hard. It's even harder when Washington seems focused on everything but your concerns, Kinsey's concerns.

There are plenty of people who count on you getting cynical and count on you not getting involved so that you don't vote, so you give up. And you can't give into that. America is making progress, despite what the cynics say. Despite unyielding opposition and a Congress that can't seem to do anything, there are workers with jobs who didn't have them before; there are families with health insurance who didn't have them before; there are students in college who couldn't afford it before; there are troops who served tour after tour who are home with their families today.

Cynicism is popular. [*Applause*] Cynicism is popular these days. It's what passes off as wisdom. But cynics didn't put a man on the Moon. Cynics never won a war. Cynics didn't cure a disease or start a business or feed a young mind. Cynicism didn't bring about the right for women to vote or the right for African Americans to be full citizens. Cynicism is a choice.

Hope is a better choice. Hope is what gave young soldiers the courage to storm a beach. Hope is what gave young people the strength to march for women's rights and civil rights and voting rights and gay rights and immigration rights.

Hope is what compelled Kinsey to sit down and pick up a pen and ask, "What can I do?," and actually think maybe the President might read that story and it might make a difference. And her voice rang out here in the Paramount Theatre. And it's her voice and your voice that's going to change this country. That's how we're going to make sure that we remain the greatest nation on Earth, not by asking what we can do for ourselves, but what we can do for each other and what we can do for our country.

And so, as President, I'm going to keep a promise that I made when I first ran: Every day, I will keep asking the same question, and that is, how can I help you? And I'll keep treating your cares and your concerns as my own. And I will keep fighting to restore the American Dream for everybody who's willing to work for it.

And I am going to need you to be right there with me. Do not get cynical. Hope is the better choice.

Thank you, Texas. Thank you, Austin. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:48 p.m. at the Paramount Theatre. In his remarks, he referred to Houston, TX, resident Kinsey Button and her parents Tina and Mitchell Button; David Johnson, husband of Denver, CO, small-business owner Carolyn Reed; former President George W. Bush; and actors Mark Wahlberg and Anthony Estrella, who portrayed detectives in the film "The Departed." He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Shaun L.S. Donovan as Director of the Office of Management and Budget
July 10, 2014

I am pleased that Republicans and Democrats in the Senate today confirmed Shaun Donovan as the next Director of the Office of Management and Budget. From his outstanding work at HUD helping to rebuild our housing market to his leadership in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, Shaun has played a crucial role in our efforts to battle back from the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes and expand opportunity for more Americans. While we have made significant strides by investing in areas that are helping to grow the economy, creating good jobs, and promoting more effective and efficient management in Government, Shaun knows there is more work to do, and today's bipartisan vote ensures the dedicated professionals at OMB will have a proven, effective leader to build on the progress we've made.

The President's Weekly Address
July 12, 2014

Hi, everybody. This week, I spent some time in Colorado and Texas, talking with people about what's going on in their lives.

One of them was Elizabeth Cooper, who will be a college junior this fall. She wrote to tell me something I hear often: how hard it is for middle class families like hers to afford college. And she shared something I know many of you feel when you wonder what's going on in Washington. She said she feels "not significant enough to be addressed, not poor enough for people to worry [about], and not rich enough to be cared about."

I ran for President to fight for Americans just like Elizabeth, people who work hard, do everything right, and just want a chance to build a decent life for themselves and their families.

And after the worst economic crisis in generations, our businesses have now created nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. The unemployment rate has fallen to its lowest point since 2008. By almost every measure, our economy is better off than it was 5 years ago.

But while we've created more jobs at this point of the year than any year since 1999, too many families barely earn what they did in 1999. It's harder to pay for college, save, or retire because people's wages and incomes have not gone up. Nearly all the gains of the recovery are going to the very top and aren't making a difference in your lives.

Now, I believe America does better when the middle class does better. And I've laid out an opportunity agenda to create jobs, train workers, educate our kids, and make sure hard work actually pays off. These are the things we should be doing to grow the middle class and to help folks work their way into the middle class. And it's pretty uncontroversial stuff. I hope we can work together on it. And I'm always willing to compromise if folks have other

ideas or if it advances generally the interests of working Americans.

But so far this year, Republicans in Congress have blocked every serious idea to strengthen the middle class. Lifting the minimum wage, fair pay, student loan reform—they've said no to all of it. And that's when I've acted this year to help working Americans on my own: when Congress won't act.

I've taken actions to attract new jobs, lift workers' wages, help students pay off their loans, and more. And the Republican plan right now is not to do some of this work with me; instead, it's to sue me. That's actually what they're spending their time on. It's a political stunt that's going to waste months of America's time. And by the way, they're going to pay for it using your hard-earned tax dollars.

I have a better idea: Do something, Congress. Do anything to help working Americans. Join the rest of the country. Join me, I'm looking forward to working with you.

You know, on Tuesday, I met with Carolyn Reed and her husband David, who own six Silver Mine Sub shops in Colorado. Two days later, they announced they're giving their hourly employees a raise to $10.10 an hour. They're not waiting for Congress. Carolyn said, "We are happy to be a part of what I hope will be a growing voluntary trend in increased wages."

Carolyn and Americans like her all across the country are happy to do their part. Congress now needs to step up and do its part. And next week, I'll travel to a couple of job sites to talk about how Democrats and Republicans can work together to grow the economy and protect nearly 700,000 jobs by passing a highway bill by the end of the summer.

I'm here because of hard-working Americans like Elizabeth and Carolyn. That's something I'll never forget; it's something I'll never stop fighting for.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 12:10 p.m. on July 11 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on July 12. In the address, the President referred to Elizabeth Cooper, student, University of Northern Colorado; and David Johnson, husband of Denver, CO, small-business owner Carolyn Reed. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 11, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 12.

Remarks at the Iftar Dinner
July 14, 2014

Good evening, everyone, and welcome to the White House. Every year, our iftar is a chance to join in fellowship with friends, old and new, and to celebrate the incredible diversity of our great Nation. And I want to recognize members of our diplomatic corps who are here—and it's wonderful to have you back—as well as Members of Congress who are joining us here tonight. We have leaders from my administration. And most importantly, we welcome Muslim Americans from across the country. So I want to thank you all for being here. *Ramadan Kareem.* It's late, you're hungry, I will be brief. [*Laughter*]

Tonight we honor the traditions of one of the world's great faiths. For Muslims, Ramadan is a time to reflect and to remember that discipline and devotion is the essence of a life of faith. And for all of us, whatever our faiths, Ramadan is a reminder of just how much we share. The values of peace and charity, the importance of family and community—these are universal values. The command to love one another, to uphold justice, and to care for the least among us—these are common threads in our faith traditions.

Tonight we reaffirm a simple truth. Fundamental to the character of our country is our freedom of religion, the right to practice our faith as we choose, to change our faith if we choose, or to practice no faith at all, and to do all this free from fear of persecution. All of us are deserving of an equal opportunity to thrive, no matter who we are, what we look like, what

we believe, or how we pray. And all of us have an obligation to do our part to help others overcome barriers, to reverse the injustice of inequality, and to help more of our fellow citizens share in the promise of America.

In Islam, there is a hadith that says, God helps the servant as long as the servant helps his brother. In other words, we're summoned to serve and lift up one another, and that's the lesson of several of our guests here tonight.

I'm just going to mention a couple. Kelly Carlisle served our country in the Navy. And more recently, she founded Acta Non Verba—deeds, not words. And in a very tough part of Oakland, California, she started an urban farm where local children can grow and sell fresh food, which Michelle would appreciate very much. [*Laughter*] Then, Kelly deposits a hundred percent of the profits they earn into individual savings accounts for those children, because studies show that a child with a savings account is more likely to attend college. So, thanks to Kelly, these boys and girls are not only learning the value of hard work at an early age, they're changing how they think about themselves and opening their minds to what's possible in their lives. So we want to thank Kelly for that great work.

Growing up in Pakistan, Muhammed Chaudhry and his family, part of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, were mistreated because of their beliefs. And they immigrated to America, and in California, Muhammed saw world-changing technologies being launched in the same neighborhoods where too many students struggled just to stay in school. Today, he runs a foundation that works with schools, parents, and local IT startups to better prepare students to embrace science and math. And they've started turning the tables. Thanks to Muhammed's foundation, so many of these students are now taking classes that put them on track for college. So we want to thank Muhammed for being such a great example.

And you can see the kind of impact Muhammed's work can have—how each generation can help bring along the next—in young people like Aala Mohamed. Aala's family immigrated to the United States from Sudan. Both her parents worked several jobs in order to send her to a good high school in Chicago, a great town. I added that. That's not in the remarks. [*Laughter*] But according to Aala, applying for college was a depressing time because she didn't know what opportunities were out there and she didn't know how her family would pay for her college.

But with the help of a nonprofit that focuses on young people like her, she set her sights high. She earned admission to Yale, which I understand is quite good. [*Laughter*] She graduated with a double major. Today, she works in finance, and now she's paying it forward by developing a curriculum to inspire Muslim high school students, especially girls, to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math. So we want to thank Aala for that.

So these three individuals are just an example of the wonderful work that is done. You've made it your mission, each in your own way, to help others overcome barriers and to push back on those forces of inequality and to help the next generation share in the American Dream. These folks realize that sometimes, all a young person needs is knowing that somebody cares about them and believes in them. I know I'm only here because a few people—my mother and my grandparents and dedicated teachers—took time to invest in me.

And so we've got to do everything in our power—as a nation and as individuals—to make sure more Americans have the opportunity to move ahead and move up, whether it's good wages that reward hard work, good jobs that help provide for a career and a family, or the education that allows every child to realize his potential or her God-given potential. And that's my mission as President. I want to thank all of those here tonight who, in their respective, communities try to do the same thing.

And finally, tonight reminds us of our responsibilities to each other beyond our borders, as well as within. Even as we celebrate all that we have in common, we know that in too many corners of the world we see violence and terror of those who would destroy rather than build. These are particularly difficult times in the Middle East. In Syria, the Asad regime

continues its brutality against the Syrian people, and so we continue to help Syrians stand up to Asad and deal with the humanitarian crisis and push back against extremists. In Iraq, where ISIL's attacks on civilians and destruction of religious sites seek to inflame sectarian tensions, we continue to call for a new Government that can unite Iraqis and show all communities in Iraq that they can advance their aspirations through the political process.

Separately, the pictures we are seeing in Gaza and Israel are heart wrenching. People here in the United States care deeply about what's happening there, and I know there are strong views, as well as differences, about how we should move forward, which is part of American democracy. We welcome that debate. That makes us stronger.

Our goal has been and continues to be peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians. Now, I will say very clearly: No country can accept rockets fired indiscriminately at citizens. And so we've been very clear that Israel has the right to defend itself against what I consider to be inexcusable attacks from Hamas. At the same time, on top of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza that we've worked long and hard to alleviate, the death and injury of Palestinian civilians is a tragedy, which is why we've emphasized the need to protect civilians, regardless of who they are or where they live.

I believe further escalation benefits no one, least of all the Israeli and the Palestinian people. So we're going to continue doing everything we can to facilitate a return to the 2012 cease-fire. We are encouraged that Egypt has made a proposal to accomplish this goal, which we hope can restore the calm that we've been seeking. More broadly, however, the situation in Gaza reminds us again that the status quo is unsustainable and that the only path to true security is a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, where differences are resolved peacefully and in ways that respect the dignity of all people.

Here at home, even as we're vigilant in ensuring our security, we have to continue to remain true to our highest ideals. In the United States of America, there is no place for false divisions between races and religions. We are all Americans, equal in rights and dignity, and no one should ever be targeted or disparaged because of their faith. And that too is what makes us stronger.

So tonight, as we gather to celebrate Ramadan, let's renew our obligations to one another. Like Kelly and Muhammed and Aala, let's help lift up our neighbors so more people share in the American Dream. Let's commit ourselves—as nations and as individuals—to pursue the peace we seek in our world. And let's remember whatever our faith, we are servants of God, summoned to care for our brothers and sisters. So God bless you all, God bless America, and may you and your families have a blessed Ramadan.

That went a little longer than I expected, but please get back to the soup, which I understand is quite good. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:03 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Muhammed Chaudhry, president and chief executive officer, Silicon Valley Education Foundation; Aala Mohamed, consultant and coordinator, Al-Mustakbal; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at the Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center in McLean, Virginia

July 15, 2014

Hello, everybody! Everybody, have a seat, have a seat, have a seat. Good afternoon. Thank you, Secretary Foxx, for that introduction.

I just got a tour of a lab where automakers and Government researchers team up to create new technologies that help cars communicate with the world around them and with each

other. They can tell you if an oncoming vehicle is about to run a red light or if a car is coming around a blind corner or if a detour would help you save some time and gas. And I got to test all this in a simulator. It was sort of like "Knight Rider." [*Laughter*] I have to say, though, it was a little disorienting. I haven't driven in about 6 years. And I'm going down the highway, and I think I had a little bit of a lead foot. I was starting to hit 90. [*Laughter*] And then, like, right next to me, the press pool is standing there, and they're kind of traveling with me at 90 miles an hour, and it got me a little queasy. [*Laughter*] But I've recovered.

Now, as the father of a daughter who just turned 16, any new technology that makes driving safer is important to me. And new technology that makes driving smarter is good for the economy. One study shows that Americans spend 5.5 billion hours stuck in traffic each year, which costs us $120 billion in wasted time and gas. That's 800 bucks per commuter. Then you've got outdated roads and bridges that mean businesses pay an extra $27 billion in freight costs, which are then passed on to consumers. So, all told, transportation eats up more of the typical family's household budget than anything except the rent or a mortgage, which means that the cutting-edge research that all of you are doing here helps save lives and save money and leads to new jobs and new technologies and new industries. And that's why America has to invest more in the kind of job-creating research and development that you're doing right here at the Highway Research Center.

Now, I'm also here today to talk about why America has got to invest more in rebuilding the infrastructure that these cars will drive on, because it will create better jobs and better position America for the future.

We know that in a 21st-century economy businesses will set up shop wherever they find the best roads and bridges and the fastest rail and Internet, the smartest airports, the smartest power grids. First-class infrastructure attracts first-class jobs. And right now our investments in transportation are lagging the rest of the world.

If Washington were working the way it's supposed to, Congress would be fixing that. We'd be investing in the things that help America bring more good jobs to our shores. Instead, here's what's going on in Washington. There's something called the highway trust fund; I suspect this crew is familiar with it. It's—it helps States support transportation projects. If Congress fails to fund it, it runs out of money. That could put nearly 700,000 jobs at risk, including more than 17,000 right here in Virginia. More than 100,000 active projects across the country—projects where workers as we speak are paving roads and rebuilding bridges and modernizing our transit systems—those projects would be slowed or stopped. And some States have already had to put some projects on hold because they don't trust Congress to get its act together. So remember that the next time you see a job site sitting idle.

Now, the good news is, there are bipartisan bills in both the House and the Senate that would help with a short-term fix. And I support that. At the very least, Congress should be keeping people on the job who are already there right now. But all this does is set us up for the same crisis a few months from now.

So Congress shouldn't pat itself on the back for averting disaster for a few months, kicking the can down the road for a few months, careening from crisis to crisis when it comes to something as basic as our infrastructure. Instead of barely paying our bills in the present, we should be investing in the future. We should have a plan for how we're going to make sure that our roads, our bridges, our airports, our power grid, our water systems—how all those things are going to be funded, and do it in a responsible way so that people can start planning. That also means we can save more money, because we're not doing it in stopgap measures.

So that's why earlier this year, I put forward a plan to rebuild our transportation infrastructure in a more responsible way. It would support millions of jobs. It would give cities and States and private investors the certainty they need to plan ahead and hire more workers. It would help small businesses ship their goods

faster. It would help parents get home to their kids faster. It would mean less wear and tear on your car. It would mean less money on gas. It would save people money. It would support cutting-edge research like the work that you're doing here, which could end up cutting back on the number of traffic fatalities.

And my plan would not add to what is already a rapidly shrinking deficit. We've cut our deficit, by the way, by more than half since I came into office. And we would—we wouldn't be adding to the deficit, because we'd pay for this transportation project in part by closing tax loopholes for companies that ship jobs overseas and avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

So far, House Republicans have refused to act on this idea, and they haven't presented their own idea. And I think that's wrong. We shouldn't be protecting tax loopholes for a few companies that shift massive profits overseas, we should be creating jobs rebuilding the roads and bridges that help every business right here in the United States. That is a question of priorities. And what I keep hearing from folks all across the country is that if Congress would just shift its priorities a little closer to working Americans' priorities, we could help a lot of families right now.

This is not an abstract issue. And it shouldn't be even a partisan issue. Republicans, Democrats, Independents, everybody uses our roads. After this last winter, you've got potholes everywhere wrecking your car. I mean, how many here—how many people here have had the experience of you're driving along and suddenly your car is wrecked? And you pay for that out of pocket. When you are in traffic congestion—because of poor planning and bad infrastructure—when you could be at home reading to your kid or catching their ballgame, that's a cost to you. Everybody cares about that. It doesn't matter what your political persuasion is.

And after the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, our businesses have created nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. The unemployment rate is at its lowest point since September of 2008. We've made huge strides in energy independence. For the first time in more than a decade, business leaders around the world are saying the best place to invest isn't China, the best place to invest is the United States of America. But you've still got a lot of middle class families all across the country who are working harder than ever just to get ahead. They need a break. They need some help. And having better roads and less delays, that helps.

And meanwhile, Republicans in Congress keep blocking or voting down some of the ideas that would have the biggest impact on middle class families and working families. Not just creating more new construction jobs, they've said no to raising the minimum wage, to equal pay, to fixing our broken immigration system.

Now, I want to work with everybody, Republicans and Democrats, to move this country forward. But I can't just stand by while politics threatens all the hard work of millions of Americans because we've just got gridlock in Washington. So what I've tried to do is take a range of actions this year to help working Americans with my own legal authorities, from speeding up big infrastructure projects to raising wages. I'm waiting for Congress to act, but in the meantime, I've got to go ahead and do what I can do.

And in response, their plan so far has not been to join me and say, all right, Mr. President, you're right, we do need to rebuild our roads, we do need to spruce up our airports. Instead, their big idea has been to sue me. That's what they're spending time on, a political stunt that wastes America's time and taxpayer dollars.

Keep in mind, it's your money that they're going to be spending on these ridiculous pursuits instead of just getting some work done. And I'm not interested in playing political games. I'm interested in making sure the economy grows and we're creating more jobs and we're helping more middle class families get ahead.

We need to invest in America's infrastructure. You guys are helping to show us how to do it in a really smart way. We need to invest in American innovation and research and development. We

need to invest in American manufacturing. We should be training more of our workers for new and better jobs. We should be preparing every child for a world-class education. We should be making sure that hard work pays off with higher wages and greater workplace flexibility and health care and childcare. All these things would make a difference in people's day-to-day lives.

And the point is, we could do so much more if we just rallied around a sense of economic patriotism that says, you know what, the parties compete, but every once in a while, we've got to actually do some work instead of worrying about elections or trying to score points on cable TV. And we can start by investing in our country.

Because historically—it was Eisenhower who built the Interstate Highway System, working with Democrats and Republicans—this isn't a partisan issue. And when we treat some basic investments as something that we do as Americans, when we rise or fall together as one Nation and as one people, things work, and nobody can beat us. And that's the spirit that all of you show here. That's what I'm going to keep on fighting for every single day.

So I'm proud of you. I want you to keep on doing what you're doing. We're going to try to make sure Congress actually does as good of a job at what they're supposed to be doing as you guys are doing on yours. If we do, then you're going to have some parents who are getting home a little earlier. You're going to have folks who aren't going to have to go to the body shop quite as often. You're going to be seeing millions of people across the country saving money at the pump. We're going to see airline delays reduced, so when you plan that Thanksgiving trip, you're not spending the whole time in the airport. All that can make a huge difference.

But the American people have to demand that folks in Washington do their job. Do something: That's my big motto for Congress right now. Just do something. And if they don't like the transportation plan that I put forward, at least come up with your own plan. And then we can compromise. But don't just sit there and do nothing. We don't have time. America is on the move.

And part of it's on the move thanks to all of you. I really appreciate it. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Former Liberian Regime of Charles Taylor
July 15, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor declared in Executive Order 13348 of July 22, 2004, is to continue in effect beyond July 22, 2014.

Although Liberia has made significant advances to promote democracy, and the Special Court for Sierra Leone convicted Charles Taylor for war crimes and crimes against humanity, the actions and policies of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and other persons, in particular their unlawful depletion of Liberian resources and their removal from Liberia and secreting of Liberian funds and property, still challenge Liberia's efforts to strengthen its democracy and the orderly development of its political, administrative, and economic institu-

tions. These actions and policies continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 15, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Meeting of the State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience
July 16, 2014

Well, I want to thank everybody who has been participating in this very important Task Force. We've got Governors, we've got mayors, local and tribal leaders. We've got Democrats and Republicans and Independents from all the across the Nation. And we are here because we know that climate change is an undeniable scientific fact.

And these leaders are here because States and communities that they represent are already dealing with the effects of climate change. They're seeing rising sea levels, more powerful hurricanes, more intense heat waves, severe droughts, and wildfires out west. So this is already happening, and these leaders understand that climate change is a threat to public safety, it's a threat to public health and to something that we want to emphasize today: the infrastructure upon which our economy depends. More severe storms and increased flooding threaten roads and bridges and businesses. Rising sea levels threaten coastal communities and ports.

So climate change poses a direct threat to the infrastructure of America that we need to stay competitive in this 21st-century economy. That means that we should see this as an opportunity to do what we should be doing anyway, and that's modernizing our infrastructure, modernizing our roads, modernizing our bridges, power grids, our transit systems, and making sure that they're more resilient. That's going to be good for commerce, and it's obviously going to be good for communities.

As a result of this need, I've put forward a plan to build our transportation infrastructure, and it's a key part of our Climate Action Plan, making sure that we've got a smarter, more resilient infrastructure that can withstand the effects of climate change.

And today I'm announcing a series of new steps. We're going to do more, including new data and 3–D maps, to help State, local officials and communities understand which areas and which infrastructure are at risk as a consequence of climate change. We're going to help communities improve their electric grids, build stronger seawalls and natural barriers, and protect their water supplies. We're also going to invest in stronger and more resilient infrastructure.

Last month, I announced a new competitive fund—$1 billion—to help communities do this. Today we're taking steps to make sure that this competition will work. We're going to announce the specifics about who can compete, how we can learn from communities that are rebuilding stronger from disasters like Hurricane Sandy and flooding in Colorado. We want the best ideas to become models for the whole country. And the idea of this competition is not just the communities that win a grant are able to improve their infrastructure, but what we're also going to be doing is, hopefully, lifting everybody's game and making sure that people in their planning are thinking about these issues as they move forward.

So the bottom line is, investing in our infrastructure, protecting our communities, ensuring the health and safety of our citizens—none of this should be a partisan issue. This is something that Democrats, Republicans, Independents all

care about, and the leaders who are sitting around this table prove that today and prove it every day.

And I want you to know that you have a partner in me, you have a partner in this administration, and I'm confident that, working together, we can take some commonsense steps to make sure that America's infrastructure is safer, stronger, and more resilient for future generations, at the same time as we are also tackling the broader problem of climate change and trying to slow the impact of that not just here, but around the world.

So I very much appreciate the wonderful participation. I know that some great ideas have already come out of this. And I'm looking forward to continuing to work with this group in the future. So thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:24 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House.

Remarks on United States Foreign Policy
July 16, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody. I want to briefly discuss the important actions we're taking today in support of Ukraine. Before I do, I want to take a few minutes to update the American people on some pressing foreign policy challenges that I reviewed with Secretary Kerry this afternoon.

First of all, I thanked Secretary Kerry and our outstanding civilian and military leaders in Afghanistan for their success in helping to break the impasse over the Presidential election there. Thanks to their efforts and, of course, thanks to the Afghans and the courage of the two candidates, both of whom I spoke to last week, the candidates have agreed to abide by the results of a comprehensive and internationally supervised audit that will review all the ballots, and to form a unity Government. If they keep their commitments, Afghanistan will witness the first democratic transfer of power in the history of that nation.

This progress will honor both candidates, who have put the interests of a united Afghanistan first, the millions of Afghans who defied threats in order to vote, and the service of our troops and civilians who have sacrificed so much. This progress reminds us that even as our combat mission in Afghanistan ends this year, America's commitment to a sovereign, united, and democratic Afghanistan will endure, along with our determination that Americans are never again threatened by terrorists inside of Afghanistan.

Second, John updated me on the negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program. Over the last 6 months, Iran has met its commitments under the interim deal we reached last year: halting the progress of its nuclear program, allowing more inspections, and rolling back its most dangerous stockpile of nuclear material. Meanwhile, we are working with our P5-plus-1 partners and Iran to reach a comprehensive agreement that assures us that Iran's program will in fact be peaceful and that they won't obtain a nuclear weapon.

Based on consultations with Secretary Kerry and my national security team, it's clear to me that we have made real progress in several areas and that we have a credible way forward. But as we approach a deadline of July 20 under the interim deal, there are still some significant gaps between the international community and Iran, and we have more work to do. So, over the next few days, we'll continue consulting with Congress, and our team will continue discussions with Iran and our partners as we determine whether additional time is necessary to extend our negotiations.

Third, we continue to support diplomatic efforts to end the violence between Israel and Hamas. As I've said repeatedly, Israel has a right to defend itself from rocket attacks that terrorize the Israeli people. There is no country on Earth that can be expected to live under a daily barrage of rockets. And I'm proud that the Iron Dome system that Americans helped

Israel develop and fund has saved many Israeli lives.

But over the past 2 weeks, we've all been heartbroken by the violence, especially the death and injury of so many innocent civilians in Gaza: men, women, and children who were caught in the crossfire. That's why we have been working with our partners in the region to pursue a cease-fire: to protect civilians on both sides. Now, yesterday Israel did agree to a cease-fire. Unfortunately, Hamas continued to fire rockets at civilians, thereby prolonging the conflict.

But the Israeli people and the Palestinian people don't want to live like this. They deserve to live in peace and security, free from fear. And that's why we are going to continue to encourage diplomatic efforts to restore the cease-fire, and we support Egypt's continued efforts to bring this about. Over the next 24 hours, we'll continue to stay in close contact with our friends and parties in the region, and we will use all of our diplomatic resources and relationships to support efforts of closing a deal on a cease-fire. In the meantime, we're going to continue to stress the need to protect civilians—in Gaza and in Israel—and to avoid further escalation.

Finally, given its continued provocations in Ukraine, today I have approved a new set of sanctions on some of Russia's largest companies and financial institutions. Along with our allies, with whom I've been coordinating closely the last several days and weeks, I've repeatedly made it clear that Russia must halt the flow of weapons and fighters across the border into Ukraine; that Russia must urge separatists to release their hostages and support a cease-fire; that Russia needs to pursue internationally mediated talks and agree to meaningful monitors on the border. I've made this clear directly to Mr. Putin. Many of our European partners have made this clear directly to Mr. Putin. We have emphasized our preference to resolve this issue diplomatically, but that we have to see concrete actions and not just words that Russia, in fact, is committed to trying to end this conflict along the Russia-Ukraine border. So far, Russia has failed to take any of the steps that I mentioned. In fact, Russia's support for the separatists and violations of Ukraine's sovereignty has continued.

On top of the sanctions we have already imposed, we are therefore designating selected sectors of the Russian economy as eligible for sanctions. We are freezing the assets of several Russian defense companies. And we are blocking new financing of some of Russia's most important banks and energy companies. These sanctions are significant, but they are also targeted, designed to have the maximum impact on Russia while limiting any spillover effects on American companies or those of our allies.

Now, we are taking these actions in close consultation with our European allies, who are meeting in Brussels to agree on their next steps. And what we are expecting is that the Russian leadership will see, once again, that its actions in Ukraine have consequences, including a weakening Russian economy and increasing diplomatic isolation.

Now, meanwhile, we're going to continue to stand with the Ukrainian people as they seek to determine their own future. Even in the midst of this crisis, they have made remarkable progress these past few months. They held democratic elections, they elected a new President, they're pursuing important reforms, and they signed a new association agreement with the European Union. And the United States will continue to offer our strong support to Ukraine to help stabilize its economy and defend its territorial integrity, because like any people, Ukrainians deserve the right to forge their own destiny.

So, in closing, I'll point out the obvious. We live in a complex world and at a challenging time. And none of these challenges lend themselves to quick or easy solutions, but all of them require American leadership. And as Commander in Chief, I'm confident that if we stay patient and determined, that we will in fact meet these challenges.

Thanks very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:44 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to

Afghan Presidential candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ahmadzai Ghani; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine.

Remarks on Signing a Memorandum on Infrastructure Development at the Port of Wilmington in Wilmington, Delaware
July 17, 2014

Hello, everybody! Everybody, please have a seat. Please have a seat. It is wonderful to be back in Delaware.

Crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in Ukraine

Before I begin, obviously, the world is watching reports of a downed passenger jet near the Russia-Ukraine border. And it looks like it may be a terrible tragedy. Right now we're working to determine whether there were American citizens on board. That is our first priority. And I've directed my national security team to stay in close contact with the Ukrainian Government. The United States will offer any assistance we can to help determine what happened and why. And as a country, our thoughts and prayers are with all the families of the passengers, wherever they call home.

Infrastructure Development

I want to thank Jeremie for that introduction. Give Jeremie a big round of applause. It is great to be in the State that gave us Joe Biden. We've got actually some better looking Bidens with us here today. [*Laughter*] We've got Beau and his wife Hallie are here. Give them a big round of applause. We love them. We've got Governor Jack Markell, Senator Chris Coons, Congressman John Carney, County Executive Tom Gordon, and the mayor of Wilmington, Dennis Williams. We've also got two terrific members of my Cabinet: Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx is here, and Treasury Secretary Jack Lew is here.

Jack Lew's signature is actually on your money. [*Laughter*] Although, it's kind of illegible. We teased him when he first became Treasury Secretary that he was going to have to fix his signature a little bit because it looked just like a caterpillar running along the bottom. [*Laughter*]

Now, the bridge behind me used to carry 90,000 cars every day—90,000. Since last month, it's been closed for repairs. Once workers are done repairing it, this bridge will be safer; it will be more reliable for commuters and for commerce. And thanks to a competitive grant program called TIGER—a program, by the way, that was part of the Recovery Act that we initiated when I first came into office and Joe Biden helped to manage—this port is rebuilding a wharf that will finally let Wilmington compete with other ports for the biggest cargo ships. [*Applause*] For the biggest cargo ships. So far, TIGER grants have given a boost to 270 infrastructure projects and thousands of jobs all across 50 States.

And that's what I'm here to talk about today, and I've been talking about this all week: creating more good jobs rebuilding America and the opportunity that we have to seize to rebuild the American middle class.

Now, after the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, in part because of the actions we took, primarily because of the strength and determination of the American people, our businesses have now added nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. Construction and housing are rebounding. The auto industry is booming; it was in a tailspin when we came in. Manufacturing is adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. The unemployment rate is at its lowest point since September of 2008, which is one of the fastest 1-year drops in nearly 30 years.

And the decisions we made—not only to rescue our economy, but to start rebuilding it on a firmer foundation—those decisions are starting to pay off. We are more energy independent. For the first time in nearly 20 years, we produce more oil here in the United States

than we buy from abroad. First time in 20 years we're doing that.

At the same time, we're actually reducing our carbon pollution, and we're creating new jobs in clean and renewable energies: 3 times as much wind power, 10 times as much solar power.

In education, our high school graduation rate is at a record high, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before; 401(k)s are growing; fewer homes are underwater. Millions more now have the peace of mind of having quality, affordable health care if they need it. And the deficit is coming down to boot, been cut in more than half.

So, by almost every economic measure, we're doing a whole lot better now than we were when I came into office. And as I said, most of it is thanks to you, the resilience and the resolve of the American people. Because of that, we've recovered faster and come farther than almost any other advanced country on Earth. And business leaders, for the first time in a decade, around the world are saying that China is not the best place to invest, the United States is the most promising place to invest.

So we've got this huge opportunity to keep this momentum going, to keep growing the economy, but also to make sure that growth is broadly shared. We've got to make sure we're creating not just more jobs, but also raising middle class wages and incomes and making it easier for folks, if they're working hard and doing the right thing, to raise a family.

We've got to make sure that we're not just graduating more kids, we've got to also train more workers and make college more affordable. We've got to make sure our economy works for every American. That's why I ran for President. That's what I'm focused on every day. And this is more than just some fleeting political story or made-up scandal, this is the challenge of our times: making sure that if you work hard and you're responsible, anybody can get ahead in this country. That's what America is about. And we can achieve that if we just see a few changes in Washington's priorities.

So today I'm here to talk about just one example: creating good jobs of the sort that Jeremie just talked about, good jobs rebuilding America. We know that in the 21st-century economy, businesses are going to set up shop wherever they find the best roads, the best bridges, the fastest Internet connection, the fastest rail lines, the smartest airports, the best power grid. First-class infrastructure attracts investment, and it creates first-class jobs. Unfortunately, right now our investment in transportation lags behind a lot of other countries. China is doing more. Germany is doing more. They're putting money back into building the infrastructure we need to grow over the long term.

And if Washington were working the way it was supposed to, Congress would be creating jobs right now, jobs just like Jeremie talked about, jobs like these guys in the hard hats are doing right now rebuilding bridges and roads and airports and ports all across the country. It helps us now, and it helps up create jobs tomorrow. That's what we should be doing.

But instead of creating jobs rebuilding our infrastructure in a predictable, sustainable way, the debate in Washington lately has been about something called the highway trust fund. It's how America is supposed to support States on transportation projects. Congress has to keep it funded. Otherwise, States have to put projects on hold, put construction workers back on the unemployment line.

The good news is, Democrats and Republicans are about to pass a short-term fix that will keep funding going for about another 9 or 10 months. And I support that. I mean, the least we can do is just support the jobs that are already there, keep Americans on the job. But if that's all Congress does, then we're going to have the same kind of funding crisis 9 months from now. And that's not how normally you fund infrastructure, because you've got to plan it and you've got to think about, how are we helping folks and how are we helping States and cities and municipalities create plans for the future and make sure that the funding streams are level? We don't need unhelpful and unnecessary deadlines that crunch a few months from now. And we shouldn't have been this close to the deadline in the first place.

As your Governor has pointed out, even smaller transportation projects can take years to design and plan and build. A few months of funding doesn't cut it. And so Jack said, "To call this a Band-Aid is an insult to a Band-Aid." That's a pretty good line. [*Laughter*] I'm going to have to try that out.

So Congress shouldn't be too proud. It shouldn't pat itself on the back for kicking the can down the road every few months. Instead of barely paying our bills in the present, we should be planning and investing in our future. That's how the economy grows for everybody. The American people work hard every single day, and your efforts shouldn't be threatened every few months by a manufactured crisis in Washington. Everything doesn't have to be done at the last minute every time.

So what I've done is, earlier this year, put forward a plan to rebuild our transportation infrastructure in a long-term responsible way, a plan that would support millions of jobs, would give cities and States and private investors the certainty they need to hire more workers faster. It would help small businesses ship their goods faster. It would help parents get home from their commute faster so they can see their kids. And it wouldn't add to what is already a rapidly shrinking deficit because we'd pay for it in part by closing loopholes for companies that are shipping profits overseas and are avoiding paying their fair share of taxes.

So that's what we need, a broad-based plan. We've got $2 trillion worth of deferred maintenance in this country in roads and bridges and sewer systems and water mains. And we could put a lot of people back to work right now getting that done. And we're going to have to do it eventually anyway.

But so far, Congress has refused to act on the idea, which is strange because infrastructure should not be a partisan issue. You think about it. It was a Republican, Dwight Eisenhower, who built the Interstate Highway System. Lincoln built the transcontinental railroad. Both parties historically have understood that investing in this country for the long run pays off. When we invest in infrastructure we're making sure that the economy is growing not just for the next 5 years, but for another century. That's what right now Republicans in Congress don't seem to be focused on. But until they do get focused on it, I'm going to do whatever I can to create jobs rebuilding America on my own.

So today we're launching what we call the Build America Investment Initiative. And as part of it, we're creating a one-stop shop for cities and States looking to partner with the private sector to fund infrastructure projects. There are lots of investors who want to back infrastructure projects because, when it's done right, they then get a steady, long-term investment. They get a steady return.

And lots of States and local governments would welcome more private investment, but they need a partner in the Federal Government to help do some matchmaking and work through some of the complexities of private financing of infrastructure. So my administration is going to help States and cities apply for Federal loans, get more public-private partnerships up and running, get more investment flowing into communities like Wilmington.

And this builds on other actions we've taken to speed up the permitting process for big projects and attract new manufacturing jobs to America and raise more workers' wages, help women fight for fair pay, ease loan burdens for millions of students. We're taking steps on our own, still hoping that Congress at some point actually does something.

I keep hearing from folks all across the country who tell me if Members of Congress have the same priorities that most Americans do, if they felt the same sense of urgency that you feel in your own lives, we could help a lot of families right now.

Instead of playing politics, we should be creating jobs by investing in what makes our economy strong: infrastructure and manufacturing and energy and research and development and education. All these things lead to new industries.

We should be training our workers to fill new jobs. We should be preparing our kids to face global competition. We should be making

sure that hard work pays off with a higher minimum wage.

We should be seizing these opportunities. And there's a simple principle behind it: When the middle class does good and when people have ladders into the middle class if they work hard, everybody does better. You have more customers for businesses. Folks at the very top do better. America grows best from the middle out, not from the top down. That's when we succeed.

So I'm going to keep on looking for areas where Republicans and Democrats agree to move this country forward. But I'm not going to stand by when politics and inaction are holding us back.

Wherever and whenever I have a chance to help families like yours, I'm going to do it. When I have a chance to help communities like Wilmington, I'm going to do it. That's when my administration takes these executive actions: when Congress won't act.

And so far, the only response we've gotten from the Republicans is a lawsuit. [*Laughter*] They're suing me for doing my job, instead of going ahead and doing their job. That's disappointing. It's a political stunt. And by the way, they're using taxpayer money to do it. It's your money that they're wasting on this, which no serious lawyers thinks makes any sense. It's just a political stunt. We could be spending the time, energy, and effort and money to help your families.

And maybe the folks behind this think it will help them politically. I guarantee you, it's not helping you. We could do so much more if we rally around a sense of patriotism that says we can disagree on issues once in a while, but come on, let's focus on our country, let's focus on our people, a sense of common purpose, the understanding we rise or fall as one Nation and as one people. That's how we built this country together. And that's what Washington has to remember.

And the one thing I know for certain, if we work together, if we believe in one another, then we're going to keep on rebuilding our middle class. We're going to restore the American Dream for the next generation. We will continue to make sure that America is the place where no matter what you look like or where you come from or how you started, you can make it if you try. You've shown it here in Delaware. We can show it all across the country. We just need a little more focus in Washington. So keep the pressure on everybody.

Thank you. God bless you. Let's build some bridges. Let's build some roads. God bless America. Now, I'm going to sign my memorandum. I'm going to sign it.

[*At this point, the President signed the memorandum on expanding public-private collaboration on infrastructure development and financing.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Jeremie West, a carpenter with the Talley Brothers subcontractor on the I–95 bridge repair project; Delaware Attorney General Joseph R. "Beau" Biden III; and Thomas P. Gordon, county executive, New Castle County, DE.

Memorandum on Expanding Public-Private Collaboration on Infrastructure Development and Financing
July 17, 2014

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Expanding Public-Private Collaboration on Infrastructure Development and Financing

Cost-effective investment in our Nation's infrastructure is critical to creating jobs, expanding opportunity, fostering economic growth, and improving the global competitiveness of the United States. Many elements of the infrastructure sector are ripe for innovation, with new technologies and approaches promising significant gains in productivity, efficiency, and resilience. Despite the potential for growth and innovation, the United States is significantly underinvesting in both the maintenance of existing infrastructure and the development

of new projects. We must use every tool at our disposal to lay the foundation for future prosperity and create new jobs, including better collaboration between the public and private sectors with respect to infrastructure development and financing in areas such as transportation, water, ports, energy, and broadband, among others. The Federal Government can play an important role in supporting, promoting, and expanding opportunities for public and private partners to work together on developing and financing infrastructure in these areas, thus increasing overall investment while safeguarding the environment and communities and improving project delivery.

Therefore, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, I hereby direct the following:

Section 1. Policy. It shall be the policy of the Federal Government for all executive departments and agencies (agencies) to encourage awareness and understanding among State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and among Federal infrastructure financing programs and in the private sector, of the diverse opportunities for collaboration in developing, maintaining, upgrading, and financing infrastructure. It shall also be the policy of the Federal Government for all agencies to facilitate, as appropriate, greater public and private partnership and collaboration, including with international investors and companies, to develop, improve, and maintain infrastructure across the country where and when economically and environmentally beneficial and in the public interest.

Sec. 2. Department of Transportation Center. (a) Within 120 days of the date of this memorandum, the Department of Transportation shall establish a center of innovative transportation finance (center) to help interested State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and private project sponsors, understand, navigate, and use Federal transportation infrastructure financing programs in order to facilitate the use of innovative approaches to finance projects, including public-private partnerships. Where possible, the center will engage early with stakeholders to support transformational transportation projects across jurisdictions and transportation modes.

(b) Building on existing programs at the Department of Transportation, the center shall develop and make publicly available case studies, best practices, analytical tools, and other resources to build expertise and capacity among State, local, tribal, and territorial governments interested in pursuing innovative financing techniques and approaches in connection with Federal funding, a financing program, or otherwise. In this effort, the center will take advantage of the existing expertise and resources of other agencies, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and foreign governments, as well as other infrastructure stakeholders.

(c) The Department of Transportation shall develop a website as soon as practicable to serve as a single point of access for project sponsors seeking information or assistance on any transportation financing programs.

(d) In coordination with the Steering Committee on Federal Infrastructure Permitting and Review Process Improvement established by Executive Order 13604 of March 22, 2012, the center shall provide technical assistance, where possible, to ensure public and private project sponsors are aware of the environmental reviews required for proposed projects and the implications of those reviews for project planning and delivery.

Sec. 3. Establishing the Infrastructure Finance Working Group. There is established an Interagency Infrastructure Finance Working Group (Working Group), to be co-chaired by the Secretaries of the Treasury and Transportation, or their designees. In addition to the co-chairs, the Working Group shall include the heads, or their designees, of:

(a) the Department of Defense;

(b) the Department of the Interior;

(c) the Department of Agriculture;

(d) the Department of Commerce;

(e) the Department of Labor;

(f) the Department of Housing and Urban Development;

(g) the Department of Energy;

(h) the Department of Homeland Security;
(i) the Environmental Protection Agency;
(j) the Office of Science and Technology Policy;
(k) the Council on Environmental Quality;
(l) the National Economic Council; and
(m) such agencies and offices as the co-chairs may designate.

Sec. 4. Functions of the Working Group. (a) Members of the Working Group shall:

(i) assess the ways in which public-private collaborations can best support economically transformative investments, improve project delivery, expand economic opportunity, increase resilience and sustainability, advance regional infrastructure development plans, and encourage innovation in the infrastructure sector;
(ii) analyze the factors limiting effective collaboration between the public sector and private companies and investors, both domestic and international, on infrastructure, including infrastructure financing;
(iii) identify innovative and effective infrastructure financing programs and practices at the State, local, tribal, and territorial level, in the private sector, and internationally; and
(iv) share information with each other regarding existing Federal programs that support infrastructure finance and development and consider strategies to improve their accessibility, navigability, and coordination with other programs.

(b) The Working Group shall consult with State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and other public officials, as well as relevant experts, both domestic and international, private investors in infrastructure, representatives from labor organizations, public pension funds, other institutional investors, and a wide-range of infrastructure stakeholders. As part of this effort, the co-chairs shall invite experienced leaders and experts from the investment and project development community to a conference on infrastructure to discuss challenges and opportunities in infrastructure finance.

(c) Not later than 120 days from the date of this memorandum, the Working Group shall report to the President with recommendations on how to promote awareness and understanding of innovative financing at the State, local, tribal, and territorial levels and among Federal infrastructure financing programs, and increase effective public-private collaboration in infrastructure development, including the appropriate use of private financing in key infrastructure sectors. These recommendations shall also include an action plan with a timeline and goals for a period not less than 2 years from the date of the submission of the plan. Among other elements, the action plan shall include a recommendation of how best to maintain communication and engagement with the private sector on an ongoing basis and shall evaluate whether the Working Group should continue operating beyond submission of its report to the President.

(d) The Working Group shall hold its first meeting not later than 30 days from the date of this memorandum.

Sec. 5. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an agency, or the head thereof; or
(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks on the Crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in Ukraine and an Exchange With Reporters

July 18, 2014

The President. Good morning, everybody.

Yesterday Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 took off from Amsterdam and was shot down over Ukraine near the Russian border. Nearly 300 innocent lives were taken—men, women, children, infants—who had nothing to do with the crisis in Ukraine. Their deaths are a outrage of unspeakable proportions.

We know at least one American citizen, Quinn Lucas Schansman, was killed. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family for this terrible loss.

Yesterday I spoke with the leaders of Ukraine, Malaysia, and the Netherlands. I told them that our thoughts and prayers are with all the families and that the American people stand with them during this difficult time. Later today I'll be speaking to Prime Minister Abbott of Australia, which also suffered a terrible loss.

By far, the country that lost the most people on board the plane was the Netherlands. From the days of our founding, the Dutch have been close friends and stalwart allies of the United States of America. And today I want the Dutch people to know that we stand with you, shoulder to shoulder, in our grief and in our absolute determination to get to the bottom of what happened.

Now, here's what we know so far. Evidence indicates that the plane was shot down by a surface-to-air missile that was launched from an area that is controlled by Russian-backed separatists inside of Ukraine. We also know that this is not the first time a plane has been shot down in eastern Ukraine. Over the last several weeks, Russian-backed separatists have shot down a Ukrainian transport plane and a Ukrainian helicopter, and they claimed responsibility for shooting down a Ukrainian fighter jet. Moreover, we know that these separatists have received a steady flow of support from Russia. This includes arms and training. It includes heavy weapons, and it includes antiaircraft weapons.

Here's what must happen now. This was a global tragedy. An Asian airliner was destroyed in European skies, filled with citizens from many countries. So there has to be a credible international investigation into what happened. The U.N. Security Council has endorsed this investigation, and we will hold all its members—including Russia—to their word. In order to facilitate that investigation, Russia, pro-Russian separatists, and Ukraine must adhere to an immediate cease-fire. Evidence must not be tampered with. Investigators need to access the crash site. And the solemn task of returning those who were lost on board the plane to their loved ones needs to go forward immediately.

The United States stands ready to provide any assistance that is necessary. We've already offered the support of the FBI and the National Transportation Safety Board, which has experience in working with international partners on these types of investigations. They are on their way, personnel from the FBI and the National Transportation Safety Board.

In the coming hours and days, I'll continue to be in close contact with leaders from around the world as we respond to this catastrophe. Our immediate focus will be on recovering those who were lost, investigating exactly what happened and putting forward the facts.

Now, I want to point out there will likely be misinformation as well. I think it's very important for folks to sift through what is factually based and what is simply speculation. No one can deny the truth that is revealed in the awful images that we all have seen. And the eyes of the world are on eastern Ukraine, and we are going to make sure that the truth is out.

More broadly, I think it's important for us to recognize that this outrageous event underscores that it is time for peace and security to be restored in Ukraine. For months, we've supported a pathway to peace, and the Ukrainian Government has reached out to all Ukrainians, put forward a peace plan, and lived up to a cease-fire, despite repeated violations by the

separatists, violations that took the lives of Ukrainian soldiers and personnel.

Moreover, time and again, Russia has refused to take the concrete steps necessary to deescalate the situation. I spoke to President Putin yesterday in the wake of additional sanctions that we had imposed. He said he wasn't happy with them, and I told him that we have been very clear from the outset that we want Russia to take the path that would result in peace in Ukraine, but so far at least, Russia has failed to take that path. Instead, it has continued to violate Ukrainian sovereignty and to support violent separatists. It has also failed to use its influence to press the separatists to abide by a cease-fire. That's why, together with our allies, we've imposed growing costs on Russia.

So now is, I think, a somber and appropriate time for all of us to step back and take a hard look at what has happened. Violence and conflict inevitably lead to unforeseen consequences. Russia, these separatists, and Ukraine all have the capacity to put an end to the fighting. Meanwhile, the United States is going to continue to lead efforts within the world community to deescalate the situation, to stand up for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and to support the people of Ukraine as they courageously work to strengthen their democracy and make their own decisions about how they should move forward.

Situation in Israel and Gaza

Before I take just a couple of questions, let me remark on one other issue. This morning I spoke with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel about the situation in Gaza. We discussed Israel's military operation in Gaza, including its efforts to stop the threat of terrorist infiltration through tunnels into Israel. I reaffirmed my strong support for Israel's right to defend itself. No nation should accept rockets being fired into its borders or terrorists tunneling into its territory. In fact, while I was having the conversation with Prime Minister Netanyahu, sirens went off in Tel Aviv.

Now, I also made clear that the United States and our friends and allies are deeply concerned about the risks of further escalation and the loss of more innocent life. And that's why we've indicated, although we support military efforts by the Israelis to make sure that rockets are not being fired into their territory, we also have said that our understanding is the current military ground operations are designed to deal with the tunnels, and we are hopeful that Israel will continue to approach this process in a way that minimizes civilian casualties and that all of us are working hard to return to the cease-fire that was reached in November of 2012.

Secretary Kerry is working to support Egypt's initiative to pursue that outcome. I told Prime Minister Netanyahu that John is prepared to travel to the region following additional consultations.

Crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in Ukraine

Let me close by making one additional comment. On board Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17, there were apparently nearly 100 researchers and advocates traveling to an international conference in Australia dedicated to combating AIDS/HIV. These were men and women who had dedicated their own lives to saving the lives of others, and they were taken from us in a senseless act of violence.

In this world today, we shouldn't forget that in the midst of conflict and killing, there are people like these: people who are focused on what can be built rather than what can be destroyed; people who are focused on how they can help people that they've never met; people who define themselves not by what makes them different from other people, but by the humanity that we hold in common. It's important for us to lift them up and to affirm their lives. And it's time for us to heed their example.

The United States of America is going to continue to stand for the basic principle that people have the right to live as they choose, that nations have the right to determine their own destiny, and that when terrible events like this occur, the international community stands on the side of justice and on the side of truth.

So with that, let me take just a couple questions. I'll start with you, Julie [Julie Pace, Associated Press].

Crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in Ukraine/U.S. Sanctions Against Russia/Situation in Ukraine/Potential U.S. Military Role in Ukraine

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Just on a technical matter, does the U.S. believe that this passenger jet was targeted, or that those people who shot it down may have been going after a military—thought they were going after a military aircraft? And more broadly, this incident does seem to escalate the crisis in Ukraine to a level we haven't seen before. Does that change your calculus in terms of what the U.S. and perhaps Europe should be doing in terms of a response?

The President. Well, I think it's too early for us to be able to guess what the intentions of those who might have launched the—this surface-to-air missile might have had. The investigation is going to be ongoing, and I think what we'll see is additional information surfacing over the next 24 hours, 72 hours, the next week, the next month.

What we know right now, what we have confidence in saying right now, is that a surface-to-air missile was fired and that's what brought the jet down. We know—or we have confidence in saying—that that shot was taken within a territory that is controlled by the Russian separatists.

But I think it's very important for us to make sure that we don't get out ahead of the facts. And at this point, in terms of identifying specifically what individual or group of individuals or personnel ordered the strike, how it came about, those are things that I think are still going to be subject to additional information that we're going to be gathering. And we're working with the entire international community to make sure that the focus is on getting to the bottom of this thing and being truthful.

And my concern is obviously that there's been a lot of misinformation generated in eastern Ukraine generally. This should snap everybody's heads to attention and make sure that we don't have time for propaganda, we don't have time for games. We need to know exactly what happened. And everybody needs to make sure that we're holding accountable those who committed this outrage.

With respect to the second question, as you're aware, before this terrible incident happened we had already ratcheted up sanctions against Russia. And I think the concern not just of Russian officials, but of the markets, about the impact that this could have on the Russian economy is there for all to see.

I made clear to President Putin that our preferred path is to resolve this diplomatically. But that means that he and the Russian Government have to make a strategic decision: Are they going to continue to support violent separatists whose intent is to undermine the Government of Ukraine? Or are they prepared to work with the Government of Ukraine to arrive at a cease-fire and a peace that takes into account the interests of all Ukrainians?

There has been some improved language at times over the last month coming from the Kremlin and coming from President Putin, but what we have not seen is an actual transition and different actions that would give us confidence that that's the direction that they want to take.

And we will continue to make clear that as Russia engages in efforts that are supporting the separatists, that we have the capacity to increase the costs that we impose on them. And we will do so, not because we're interested in hurting Russia for the sake of hurting Russia, but because we believe in standing up for the basic principle that a country's sovereignty and territorial integrity has to be respected and it is not the United States or Russia or Germany or any other country that should be deciding what happens in that country.

Q. At this point do you see any U.S. military role that could be effective?

The President. We don't see a U.S. military role beyond what we've already been doing in working with our NATO partners and some of the Baltic States, giving them reassurances that we are prepared to do whatever is required to meet our alliance obligations.

Steve Holland [Reuters].

Responsibility for Downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 in Ukraine/Situation in Ukraine

Q. Sir, thank you. How much blame for this do you put on President Putin? And will you use this incident now to push the Europeans for stronger action?

The President. We don't exactly know what happened yet, and I don't want to, as I said before, get out ahead of the facts. But what I do know is, is that we have seen a ticking up of violence in eastern Ukraine that, despite the efforts of the Ukrainian Government to abide by a cease-fire and to reach out and agree to negotiations, including with the separatists, that has been rebuffed by these separatists. We know that they are heavily armed and that they are trained. And we know that that's not an accident. That is happening because of Russian support.

So it is not possible for these separatists to function the way they're functioning, to have the equipment that they have—set aside what's happened with respect to the Malaysian Airlines—a group of separatists can't shoot down military transport planes or, they claim, shoot down fighter jets without sophisticated equipment and sophisticated training. And that is coming from Russia.

So we don't yet know exactly what happened with respect to the Malaysian Airlines, although obviously, we're beginning to draw some conclusions given the nature of the shot that was fired. There are only certain types of antiaircraft missiles that can reach up 30,000 feet and shoot down a passenger jet. We have increasing confidence that it came from areas controlled by the separatists. But without having a definitive judgment on those issues yet, what we do know is, is that the violence that's taking place there is facilitated in part—in large part—because of Russian support. And they have the ability to move those separatists in a different direction.

If Mr. Putin makes a decision that we are not going to allow heavy armaments and the flow of fighters into Ukraine across the Ukrainian-Russian border, then it will stop. And if it stops, then the separatists will still have the capacity to enter into negotiations and try to arrive at the sort of political accommodations that Mr. Putin himself says he wants to see. He has the most control over that situation, and so far, at least, he has not exercised it.

Q. Tougher sanctions in Europe, will you push for them?

The President. Well, I think that this certainly will be a wake-up call for Europe and the world that there are consequences to an escalating conflict in eastern Ukraine; that it is not going to be localized, it is not going to be contained. What we've seen here is, just in one country alone, our great allies, the Dutch, 150 or more of their citizens being killed. And that, I think, sadly brings home the degree to which the stakes are high for Europe, not simply for the Ukrainian people, and that we have to be firm in our resolve in making sure that we are supporting Ukraine in its efforts to bring about a just cease-fire and that we can move towards a political solution to this.

I'm going to make this the last question. Lisa Lerer, Bloomberg.

U.S. Citizen Aboard Malaysia Airlines Flight 17/U.S. Sanctions Against Russia

Q. Do we know yet if there were other Americans on board beyond the person you mentioned? And how do you prevent stricter restrictions, economic sanctions from shocking the global economy and—[*inaudible*].

The President. We have been pretty methodical over the last 24 hours in working through the flight manifest and identifying which passengers might have had a U.S. passport. At this point, the individual that I mentioned is the sole person that we can definitively say was a U.S. or dual citizen.

Because events are moving so quickly, I don't want to say with absolute certainty that there might not be additional Americans, but at this stage, having worked through the list, been in contact with the Malaysian Government, which processed the passports as folks were boarding, this is our best assessment of the number of Americans that were killed. Obviously, that does nothing to lessen our outrage

about all those families. Regardless of nationality, it is a heartbreaking event.

With respect to the effect of sanctions on the economy, we have consistently tried to tailor these sanctions in ways that would have an impact on Russia, on their economy, on their institutions or individuals that are aiding and abetting in the activities that are taking place in eastern Ukraine, while minimizing the impacts on not only the U.S. economy, but the global economy.

It is a relevant consideration that we have to keep in mind. The world economy is integrated. Russia is a large economy. There's a lot of financial flows between Russia and the rest of the world. But we feel confident that at this point the sanctions that we've put in place are imposing a cost on Russia, that their overall impact on the global economy is minimal. It is something that we have to obviously pay close attention to, but I think Treasury, in consultation with our European partners, have done a good job so far on that issue. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:52 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine; Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia; and Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands.

Remarks at the Kids' State Dinner
July 18, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! I am not going to hold up the meal. Everybody, sit down. [*Laughter*] I just wanted to come by because I love the event. First of all, we have a lot of state dinners around here.

The First Lady. We do.

The President. They're not always as cheerful and fun as this. [*Laughter*] First of all, everybody is older and a little stodgier. But this is a much hipper crowd. More colorful outfits—so I like that. But I also just love seeing young people who are doing wonderful things. We are so proud of you. To see the kind of leadership you're taking and the way that you've really thrown yourselves into these projects is just really inspiring.

And sometimes, people ask me, you know, Mr. President, you have this really tough job, and there's always stuff happening all around the world, and how do you keep up with all of it and how do you keep your spirits up? And my answer is, because I meet young people every day who I know are energetic and are full of great ideas and are going to be continuing to make this country better. This is one way to do it. You guys are leaders in your schools and in your communities, and you're helping to teach folks the importance of good nutrition, the importance of putting good fuel in your bodies so that you're living healthy, active lives.

And by the way, one thing—maybe I shouldn't say this, but it's not like our family, including me, don't have some snacks once in a while—[*laughter*]—that may not be on the perfect nutrition chart.

The First Lady. It's true. [*Laughter*]

The President. Each of us have our weaknesses, so I'm going to reveal some right now.

The First Lady. Uh-oh.

The President. Malia, ice cream. I mean, basically, it's very hard for her to turn down ice cream. But she has learned to kind of control herself when it comes to ice cream.

The First Lady. It's hard.

The President. It's hard, but she still has fun when she does have ice cream. In fact, the fact that she doesn't have ice cream every day means when she has it——

The First Lady. It's very special.

The President. ——it's like, hallelujah. She starts—she is so happy. [*Laughter*] Sasha—what would you say is Sasha's pig-out indulgence food?

The First Lady. She's into—it's not a—she likes sushi.

The President. Oh, no. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. It's what she's into.

The President. She is kind of into sushi right now. She's a little—I love sushi, so maybe I had some influence there. But let's say for—her pies. She pretty much takes dessert whenever she can.

The First Lady. Pies.

The President. Pie. She's like me. My big thing: chips and guacamole. [*Laughter*] Like, basically, if there is a bowl of good chips and guacamole——

The First Lady. He loses it.

The President. I lose my mind. [*Laughter*] I lose my mind. And the First Lady: french fries. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. But I'm going to say this. I'm making a vow: I'm going to take a break from french fries.

The President. Really?

The First Lady. Yes.

The President. Wow, that's big. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. On the record. I put it out there.

The President. Now, the reason I make this point is that the question is not, can you never have anything. It's, on a day-to-day basis, at lunches, at breakfast, at dinner, is your basic nutrition something that's going to make you strong and make you healthy? And if it is, then having fun food that may not be perfect for you, that's okay too.

But we're just all trying to develop good habits. And the one thing I know about all these young people is, they've got great work habits, because otherwise, they wouldn't have been able to do everything that they've done. They've got great habits of caring about other people, because they're out there spreading the word about what they're doing. And as a consequence, I'm really optimistic about what all these great young leaders are going to achieve in the future.

So good luck. Have a great Kids' State Dinner, all right? Even though it's technically a lunch. [*Laughter*] Calling it a state lunch—there was a debate about this, and we thought——

The First Lady. It doesn't work.

The President. ——it doesn't make sense, because we have state dinners. So it's a Kids' State Dinner, even though it's noon. All right?

And parents, good job, everybody. You've got great kids.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady and "Let's Move!" initiative Executive Director and Senior Policy Adviser for Nutrition Policy Sam Kass.

Statement on Nelson Mandela International Day
July 18, 2014

Today I join people around the world in celebrating Nelson Mandela International Day. A personal hero of mine and of countless others, Nelson Mandela was one of the most influential, courageous, and profoundly decent human beings to grace the earth. A dignified warrior for justice and equality, he caused us to believe in the promise of a better world. Today, Madiba's birthday, is the first time we have marked this occasion since he left this world late last year, but his impact on our lives remains palpable and his inspiration endures. A humble and committed public servant, Madiba said this day was not to be a holiday, but one devoted to service. It was his hope that people would dedicate their time and effort to improve the conditions within their community, stating there "can be no greater gift than that of giving one's time and energy to help others without expecting anything in return." We may never see the likes of Madiba again, but we can honor and emulate him by taking time today, and all other days, to engage in acts of service.

Memorandum on the Proposed Amendment to the 1958 Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defense Purposes
July 18, 2014

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Energy

Subject: Proposed Amendment to the 1958 Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defense Purposes

I have reviewed and concur with the positions taken in your joint letter to me of July 9, 2014, recommending approval of a proposed Amendment to the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defense Purposes of July 3, 1958, as amended (the "1958 Agreement"). I note from your joint recommendation and concur with your assessment that the United Kingdom, by participating with the United States pursuant to an international agreement, is making substantial and material contributions to the mutual defense and security. The proposed Amendment to the 1958 Agreement will permit cooperation that will further improve our mutual defense posture and support our interests under NATO. I hereby:

- approve the proposed Amendment to the 1958 Agreement;
- determine that performance under the proposed Amendment will promote and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security;
- approve the program outlined in this Amendment and determine that such program will promote and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security; and
- authorize the execution of the proposed Amendment for the Government of the United States in a manner specified by the Secretary of State.

BARACK OBAMA

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations
July 18, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to transnational criminal organizations declared in Executive Order 13581 of July 24, 2011, is to continue in effect beyond July 24, 2014.

The activities of significant transnational criminal organizations have reached such scope and gravity that they threaten the stability of international political and economic systems. Such organizations are becoming increasingly sophisticated and dangerous to the United States; they are increasingly en-

trenched in the operations of foreign governments and the international financial system, thereby weakening democratic institutions, degrading the rule of law, and undermining economic markets. These organizations facilitate and aggravate violent civil conflicts and increasingly facilitate the activities of other dangerous persons.

The activities of significant transnational criminal organizations continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13581 with respect to transnational criminal organizations.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
July 19, 2014

Hi, everybody. Over the past 52 months, our businesses have created nearly 10 million new jobs. The unemployment rate has fallen to its lowest point since 2008. Across lots of areas—energy, manufacturing, technology—our businesses and workers are leading again. In fact, for the first time in over a decade, business leaders worldwide have declared that China is no longer the world's best place to invest, America is.

Now, none of this is an accident. It's thanks to your resilience, resolve, and hard work that America has recovered faster and come farther than almost any other advanced country on Earth.

Now we have the opportunity to ensure that this growth is broadly shared. Our economy grows best not from the top down, but from the middle out. We do better when the middle class does better. So we have to make sure that we're not just creating more jobs, but raising middle class wages and incomes. We have to make sure our economy works for every working American. My opportunity agenda does that. It's built on creating more jobs, training more workers, educating all our kids, and making sure your hard work pays off with higher wages and better benefits.

On Thursday, I traveled to Delaware to highlight how we're trying to create more good, middle class jobs rebuilding America: rebuilding roads and bridges, ports and airports, high-speed rail, and high-speed Internet.

This week, Vice President Biden will release a report he's been working on to reform our job training system into a job-driven training system. And I'll visit a community college in L.A. that's retraining workers for careers in the fast-growing health care sector. Because every worker deserves to know that if you lose your job, your country will help you train for an even better one.

In recent days, both parties in Congress have taken some good steps in these areas. But we can do so much more for the middle class and for folks working to join the middle class. We should raise the minimum wage so that no one who works full time has to live in poverty. We should fight for fair pay and paid family leave. We should pass commonsense immigration reform that strengthens our borders and our businesses and includes a chance for long-time residents to earn their citizenship.

I want to work with Democrats and Republicans on all these priorities. But I will do whatever I can, whenever I can, to help families like yours. Because nothing's more important to me than you: your hopes, your concerns, and making sure this country remains the place where everyone who works hard can make it if you try.

Thanks so much, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:15 p.m. on July 18 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on July 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 18, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 19.

Remarks on Signing an Executive Order on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Employment Discrimination
July 21, 2014

The President. Thank you. All right, everybody, have a seat, have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House, everybody. I know I'm a little late. [*Laughter*] But that's okay because we've got some big business to do here.

Many of you have worked for a long time to see this day coming. You organized, you spoke up, you signed petitions, you sent letters. I know because I got a lot of them. [*Laughter*] And now, thanks to your passionate advocacy and the irrefutable rightness of your cause, our Government—Government of the people, by the people, and for the people—will become just a little bit fairer.

Audience member. Amen.

The President. It is—[*applause*]—doesn't make much sense, but today in America, millions of our fellow citizens wake up and go to work with the awareness that they could lose their job, not because of anything they do or fail to do, but because of who they are: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender. And that's wrong. We're here to do what we can to make it right, to bend that arc of justice just a little bit in a better direction.

In a few moments, I will sign an Executive order that does two things. First, the Federal Government already prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Once I sign this order, the same will be explicitly true for gender identity.

And second, we're going to prohibit all companies that receive a contract from the Federal Government from discriminating against their LGBT employees. America's Federal contracts should not subsidize discrimination against the American people.

Now, this Executive order is part of a long, bipartisan tradition. President Roosevelt signed an order prohibiting racial discrimination in the national defense industry. President Eisenhower strengthened it. President Johnson expanded it. Today I'm going to expand it again.

Currently, 18 States have already banned workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. And over 200 cities and localities have done the same. Governor Terry McAuliffe is here; his first act as Governor was to prohibit discrimination against LGBT employees of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Where did Terry go? Right back here.

I've appointed a record number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender public servants to positions across my administration. They are Ambassadors and Federal judges, special assistants, senior advisers from the Pentagon to the Labor Department. Every day, their talent is put to work on behalf of the American people.

Equality in the workplace is not only the right thing to do, it turns out to be good business. That's why a majority of Fortune 500 companies already have nondiscrimination policies in place. It is not just about doing the right thing, it's also about attracting and retrain—retaining the best talent. And there are several business leaders who are here today who will attest to that.

And yet, despite all that, in too many States and in too many workplaces, simply being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender can still be a fireable offense. There are people here today who've lost their jobs for that reason. This is not speculative, this is not a matter of political correctness; people lose their jobs as a consequence of this. Their livelihoods are threatened; their families are threatened. In fact, more States now allow same-sex marriage than prohibit discrimination against LGBT workers.

So I firmly believe that it's time to address this injustice for every American.

Now, Congress has spent 40 years—four decades—considering legislation that would help solve the problem. That's a long time. [*Laughter*] And yet they still haven't gotten it done. Senators Terry [Tammy]* Baldwin and Jeff Merkley are here. They have been champions of this issue for a long, long time. We are very proud of them. I know they will not stop fighting until fair treatment for all workers is the Federal law of the land. And we want to thank them for that. [*Applause*]

But I'm going to do what I can, with the authority I have, to act. The rest of you, of course, need to keep putting pressure on Congress to pass Federal legislation that resolves this problem once and for all.

Audience member. Amen!

The President. Amen. Amen! Got the "amen" corner here. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, the President sang.*]

The President. "Well"—[*laughter*]. You don't want to get me preaching, now. [*Laughter*]

For more than two centuries, we have strived, often at great cost, to form a more perfect Union, to make sure that we the people applies to all the people. Many of us are only here because others fought to secure rights and opportunities for us. And we've got a responsibility to do the same for future generations. We've got an obligation to make sure that the country we love remains a place where no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from or how you started out or what your last name is or who you love—no matter what, you can make it in this country.

That's the story of America. That's the story of this movement. I want to thank all of you for doing your part. We've got a long way to go, but I hope as everybody looks around this room you are reminded of the extraordinary progress that we have made not just in our lifetimes, but in the last 5 years. In the last 2 years. In the last 1 year. We're on the right side of history.

I'm going to sign this Executive order. Thank you, everybody.

[*The President signed the Executive order.*]

The President. We made it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:39 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. Executive Order 13672 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the Situations in Ukraine and Gaza
July 21, 2014

Good morning, everybody. I wanted to make a brief statement about the tragedy in Ukraine. Before I do, though, I want to note that Secretary Kerry has departed for the Middle East. As I've said many times, Israel has a right to defend itself against rocket and tunnel attacks from Hamas. And as a result of its operations, Israel has already done significant damage to Hamas's terrorist infrastructure in Gaza. I've also said, however, that we have serious concerns about the rising number of Palestinian civilian deaths and the loss of Israeli lives. And that is why it now has to be our focus and the focus of the international community to bring about a cease-fire that ends the fighting and that can stop the deaths of innocent civilians, both in Gaza and in Israel.

So Secretary Kerry will meet with allies and partners. I've instructed him to push for an immediate cessation of hostilities based on a return to the November 2012 cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. The work will not be easy. Obviously, there are enormous passions involved in this and some very difficult strategic issues involved. Nevertheless, I've asked John to do everything he can

* White House correction.

to help facilitate a cessation to hostilities. We don't want to see any more civilians getting killed.

With respect to Ukraine, it's now been 4 days since Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down over territory controlled by Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine. Over the last several days, our hearts have been absolutely broken as we've learned more about the extraordinary and beautiful lives that were lost: men, women, and children and infants who were killed so suddenly and so senselessly.

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with their families around the world who are going through just unimaginable grief. I've had the opportunity to speak to a number of leaders around the world whose citizens were lost on this flight, and all of them remain in a state of shock, but frankly, also in a state of outrage.

Our immediate focus is on recovering those who were lost, investigating exactly what happened, and putting forward the facts. We have to make sure that the truth is out and that accountability exists.

Now, international investigators are on the ground. They have been organized. I've sent teams; other countries have sent teams. They are prepared, they are organized, to conduct what should be the kinds of protocols and scouring and collecting of evidence that should follow any international incident like this. And what they need right now is immediate and full access to the crash site. They need to be able to conduct a prompt and full and unimpeded as well as transparent investigation. And recovery personnel have to do the solemn and sacred work of recovering the remains of those who were lost.

Now, Ukrainian President Poroshenko has declared a demilitarized zone around the crash site. As I said before, you have international teams already in place prepared to conduct the investigation and recover the remains of those who have been lost. But unfortunately, the Russian-backed separatists who control the area continue to block the investigation. They have repeatedly prevented international investigators from gaining full access to the wreckage. As investigators approached, they fired their weapons into the air. These separatists are removing evidence from the crash site, all of which begs the question, what exactly are they trying to hide?

Moreover, these Russian-backed separatists are removing bodies from the crash site, oftentimes without the care that we would normally expect from a tragedy like this. And this is an insult to those who have lost loved ones. This is the kind of behavior that has no place in the community of nations.

Now, Russia has extraordinary influence over these separatists. No one denies that. Russia has urged them on. Russia has trained them. We know that Russia has armed them with military equipment and weapons, including antiaircraft weapons. Key separatist leaders are Russian citizens. So, given its direct influence over the separatists, Russia and President Putin, in particular, has direct responsibility to compel them to cooperate with the investigation. That is the least that they can do.

President Putin says that he supports a full and fair investigation. And I appreciate those words, but they have to be supported by actions. The burden now is on Russia to insist that the separatists stop tampering with the evidence, grant investigators who are already on the ground immediate, full, and unimpeded access to the crash site. The separatists and the Russian sponsors are responsible for the safety of the investigators doing their work. And along with our allies and partners, we will be working this issue at the United Nations today.

More broadly, as I've said throughout this crisis and the crisis in Ukraine generally—and I've said this directly to President Putin as well as publicly—my preference continues to be finding a diplomatic resolution within Ukraine. I believe that can still happen. That is my preference today, and it will continue to be my preference.

But if Russia continues to violate Ukraine's sovereignty and to back these separatists and these separatists become more and more dangerous and now are risks not simply to the people inside of Ukraine, but the broader international community, then Russia will only further isolate itself from the international community,

and the costs for Russia's behavior will only continue to increase.

Now is the time for President Putin and Russia to pivot away from the strategy that they've been taking and get serious about trying to resolve hostilities within Ukraine in a way that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and respects the right of the Ukrainian people to make their own decisions about their own lives.

And time is of the essence. Our friends and allies need to be able to recover those who were lost. That's the least we can do. That's the least that decency demands. Families deserve to be able to lay their loved ones to rest with dignity. The world deserves to know exactly what happened. And the people of Ukraine deserve to determine their own future.

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:16 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a "My Brother's Keeper" Initiative Town Hall Meeting at the Walker-Jones Education Campus
July 21, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Give it up for Chris Paul. Everybody, have a seat. Chris was saying he was going to be nervous, but I'd seen all those State Farm ads, so I knew he could perform. [*Laughter*] Not to mention how he performs on the court. And I've gotten a chance to know Chris over the last several years, and his family, and he is just the kind of person that you want in a leadership position. We are very, very proud of him. And I'm so grateful that he agreed to participate in this.

Hello, everybody.

Audience members. Hello!

The President. How's all—how you all doing today?

Audience members. Doing good.

The President. Doing good? It is good to be at Walker-Jones. I want to thank all of you for being here. I want to thank the school for hosting us. I want to thank the outstanding Members of Congress who are here. And I want you all to know that I'm here for a simple reason, and that is, I want to hear from many of you, the young people who are here today.

I just had a chance to meet with a group of young people who are being mentored through a new program we started at the White House. In a few minutes, I'm going to have a chance to take some questions from some of the young people here today, give me a chance to hear from you about what your concerns are, what your dreams and hopes are, what your fears are, and how you think we may be able to help.

And the reason it's important for me to be here is because when I look out at some of the young men who are here, you're where I was 40—35 years ago. [*Laughter*] I was trying to do the math in my head. I'm not that old yet. And I've had a chance to talk to some young people in the past, and I always say that I see myself in the young men who are coming up now.

When I was in my teens, I didn't have a father in the house. It took me a while to realize that I was angry about that, and I acted out in some ways. I was raised by a single mom. We didn't have a lot in terms of wealth, although we had a lot of love in the house, and my grandparents helped out. But despite their best efforts, sometimes, I made some bad choices. I didn't always take school as serious as I should have. I made excuses sometimes for misbehavior.

The only difference between me and extraordinarily talented young men that I see all across the country is, I was living in a pretty forgiving environment. So, if I made a mistake, I often had a second chance, or I often had a third chance. And some of the costs of making mistakes, they weren't deadly. I wasn't going to end up shot. I wasn't going to end up in jail.

And as a consequence, for the last 5, 6, 10 years, I've constantly been thinking about, how can I make sure that I'm evening out the odds

a little bit for other young men who could end up being a doctor or a lawyer or a Senator or an Attorney General or a Secretary of Education? What is it that we can do to create structures that give them support, that help them make better choices, and that, when you do make a mistake, give you a hand up so you can recover and go ahead and move on to the next phase of your lives?

So that's why, earlier this year, we launched what we call "My Brother's Keepers." "My Brother's Keeper" isn't some new, big Government program. It's actually a team effort. It's all about a whole bunch of folks—educators, business leaders, faith leaders, foundations, government—all working together to give boys and young men of color the tools that they need to succeed and make sure that every young person can reach their potential. And so the reason that we're here today is to announce some of the pledges that have already been made, some of the commitments that have already been made by a series of institutions that just give you a sense of the kind of progress and excitement that we've seen since we launched this initiative.

Chris Paul was a hint of one of these big commitments. The NBA and its Players Association are joining others to recruit 25,000 new mentors and to work directly with educators and schools all across our countries. We are very proud of what the NBA is doing. And Adam Silver, the commissioner is here, as well as Chris, the Players Association president, and we want to thank them for their extraordinary involvement that they've made.

But it's not just the NBA that's already stepping up. Today we've got 60 of the country's largest school districts who are here today announcing new efforts to help boys and young men like you succeed. The Council of Great City Schools—these are some big city school superintendents—have done an extraordinary thing, pledging, making commitments to each other as well as their school districts and to their students and to parents that this is going to be a major focus for them. And we want to thank them for the great commitment that they are making.

We've got leaders from Silicon Valley and the Emerson Collective who are today launching a $50 million competition to redesign high schools so that young people can learn in classrooms built for the 21st century and that—so that you know that the models that are out there of high schools that can help translate skills into successful careers, that we're going to be rebuilding those in some cases from the ground up. So we want to thank those leaders and Emerson Collective for the great work that they're doing. Give them a big round of applause.

We've got a bipartisan group of mayors today who are going to bring the ideas behind "My Brother's Keepers" to their cities. We've got the National Congress of American Indians who are going to do the same for young Native American boys and men. So we want to thank them for the outstanding work that they're doing.

And we've got organizations and companies like the College Board and AT&T, UBS, J.P. Morgan, City Foundation, and Discovery Communications who are making big commitments of their own to help like you—young people like you get ahead.

So these are just a few of the businesses and organizations and cities that are stepping up today. I'm confident that more and more are going to be joining. One of the things that we've discovered—a pleasant surprise—has been how invested and excited the folks who we've talked to have been about this initiative. People recognize that America will succeed if we are investing in our young people. And we also know that we've got to make sure that boys and young men of color are part of that success. We will not succeed unless you succeed. And we are so proud of the commitments that have already been made, but we're also very confident that we're going to see a lot more commitments in the weeks and months to come.

So thank you, everybody. And right now I want to take some questions. So—but first of all, give all the folks who are participating commitment, give them one last big round of applause. [*Applause*] All right.

Let's see if this mike is working. Testing, one, two, three. Does that work? All right. And somebody is going to bring out my tea so that I don't get hoarse. Big Marvin. [*Laughter*]

White House Trip Director Marvin D. Nicholson, Jr. Yes, sir.

The President. Thank you. Marvin has the height for the NBA, but not the vertical. [*Laughter*] But he can hit a golf ball a long way.

So who wants to start off? What young person has got a question or a comment? What I really want to do is just have a conversation, because part of what we want the mayors who are here and the business leaders who are here, we want to give them a chance to hear directly from you. And I know it's kind of a public event and everybody is looking all serious, but try to pretend like there are no cameras here and that I'm not the President. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir, this young man right here. But what we wanted you to do is stand up. We're going to bring a mike. I want you to introduce yourself, tell me where you're from, and then make your question or your comment.

The President's Advice on Setting Goals

Q. Hello. Good afternoon. I'm Jamal Frip. I'm from Central—[*inaudible*]. My question is, did you set goals for yourself when you were younger? Like——

The President. Well, did everybody hear the question? Did I set goals for myself when I was younger? Let me say, first of all, that I actually didn't set a lot of goals for myself when I was very young. As a—when I got to be about your age, a lot of my goals revolved around basketball, which were probably misplaced goals because I did not have Chris Paul's talent. [*Laughter*] But, as I got older, so by the time I got to be a junior or senior in high school, I realized that I did need to go to college, and that required me to buckle down a little bit.

And then, when I got to college, my first 2 years, I was still kind of enjoying myself a little bit too much and was still a little too casual about my studies. And it wasn't probably until I was about 20 that something happened inside me where I really said, you know, if I want to be serious, if I want to make a contribution, if I want to be proud of myself looking back on my life, then I'm going to have to change how I do things.

And sometimes, initially, I didn't know how to do that. But that's where the goal-setting came in. Because you'd start small. I'd say to myself, all right, my goal is to read a certain number of books a month, or my goal is to boost my GPA in college this much, or my goal is to interact with my peers a little differently than I had been doing in terms of how often I went out, or—right? So it could just be simple goals initially, and over time, those goals became more ambitious.

And the truth is, I still set goals every day. Every morning, I've got a checklist of here are the things that I need to get done. And it starts off with big goals. So let's just take "My Brother's Keeper." My goals is to make sure that every young person in America, if they're putting in the effort, they can succeed, and they've got ladders of opportunity to take them where they want to go regardless of what their talents or interests are. So that's a big goal. That's a 40,000-foot goal.

But if I just stay there, I'm not going to get it done, right? So then I've got to break it down into, well, what are the component parts of that? Well, number one, I've got to make sure the school system works well. So then I'm going to talk to my Secretary of Education, and I'm going to say, what are our goals this year in terms of improving, whether it's early childhood education, or making sure that young people can read at grade level by the time they're in third grade, or what have you?

But then, it's also, there's a criminal justice component to it, because I'm trying to figure out how do we get more young men into college and fewer of them into jail, which means that I've then got to talk to the Attorney General, Eric Holder, and I've got to say, what are our goals for trying to revamp how we think about the interaction between law enforcement and young men of color?

So I'll break it down into those parts. But that's still not at the best level, because now I've got to say, what's our specific plan to do it

and what am I going to be doing this week, what am I going to be doing this month, and what am I going to be doing this year to get that done? And so you keep on breaking it down from the very general down to the specific. And ideally, what I'm producing then is every day, when I wake up, I've got a checklist of here are the specific things I'm going to do today to achieve my goal.

Now—but you don't get there right away. So you can't—if you decide—what do you want to be?

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. You want to be a lawyer. Okay. And what year are you in now in school?

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. You graduate—you're a senior this—so you're a rising senior. Okay, so your first goal is, you've got to go to college to be a lawyer. So that means right now your focus should just be on, what do I need to do to get into the best college with the least debt when I graduate from college as possible? Right? That's going to be your top priority. [*Applause*] Right?

But then you can start breaking into different goals. You can start saying, what lawyers do I know where I could maybe have a summer internship at a law firm? And how do I talk to that—how do I meet somebody who's a lawyer who can give me a sense of what it's like to be a lawyer? And I've got to think about what kind of law do I want to practice and what kind of classes should I take once I get to college to prepare me for law school? So there are a whole range of things that you can start breaking down into their component parts.

But if you don't set a target, it's just like—I'll probably end up using a lot of NBA analogies here today just because I've got a lot of ballers here. You can't make a shot if you don't aim. I mean, it's pretty straightforward. The first goal is to know where it is that you're trying to put the ball. And if you don't have a clear sense of direction, a clear objective, then it doesn't matter how much talent you have, you're not going to get there. All right?

It's a great question, though. All right, who else? Young man, who already tried to invite himself to Camp David. [*Laughter*] We were talking—we were doing this mentorship program—and he said, well, when am I going to get to come to Camp David? [*Laughter*] That's a good goal. It's a little unrealistic right now. [*Laughter*] But who knows? You keep on working on it. Go ahead.

Fatherhood

Q. [*Inaudible*]—and you said when you were younger your father always wasn't around. How did you learn how to become a good father?

The President. Well, that's a good question. It wasn't just that my father wasn't always around. I only met him for a month my entire life. He wasn't there otherwise. So I didn't know him at all until I was 10. He came for a month, and then, I never saw him again.

But I had this mom who just loved me a lot, and I had grandparents who loved me a lot. And to all the heroic single moms out there, we appreciate you for what you accomplish and what you do. Because she was going to school, and she was working and having to raise me and my sister, and my grandparents gave us a lot of help, but it was hard. It was hard on her. And she was young when she had me; she was 18.

And now I—the other day I was in Minnesota, and I saw a group of young teenage moms——

Audience member. Yay!

The President. That was the Minnesota superintendent of schools who just—[*laughter*]—we got—and I just looked at them, and I thought, well, you're just children. And I thought about my mother and how she ever managed that. It's unbelievable.

But to your question, I think that two things happened. One is the values my mother taught me, I thought to myself, well, those are values that any parent should have. So it doesn't matter whether you're the dad or the mom, loving your child, being responsible for your child, teaching them how to be honest and how to be responsible themselves and how to treat other people with kindness and how to respect themselves, but respect others, how to work hard—those weren't values that were just for moms to

teach, those were values for dads to teach as well, right?

So some of it is me trying to remember what did my mom do for me and how can I do that for my daughters. And then, the second thing was just a commitment to being there, which is why part of the reason why this mentorship program is so important. Some of you have dads in your lives even if your parents are divorced, and that's great, because it's hard to replace a dad, and fathers can make this unbelievable contribution. For those who don't have that, having an adult in your life—and then for boys, especially, an adult male in their lives—just to talk to and to have an interaction with and to kind of model off of, even if sometimes, it's not that explicit but you're kind of watching folks and seeing, all right, how do they carry themselves, how do they treat other people, that makes a difference.

For me, though, it was just really important to be there. And one of the things you discover being a father is, you get out of it at least as much as you are putting into it. When I talk to young people who are thinking about parenthood or thinking about families, I try to describe, there is no greater joy than being in your children's lives and then seeing them turn out well, seeing them happy and succeeding and focused and just being good people. It's the single most important thing you do in your life. And I was lucky to—I think precisely because I didn't have that—to say to myself, I'm going to make sure that I experience that.

It also helps marrying a good woman. I should add that. [*Laughter*] So that always helps. So—[*applause*].

All right, who else? Just because that green is something, I've got to call on you. [*Laughter*] Just because that's an outfit right there. That looks sharp. [*Laughter*] All right, what's your name?

The President's Advice on Dealing With Criticism/Building Self-Esteem

Q. My name is Corray Smith, and I'm from DC. And my question is, how do you cope with, like, judgment and, like, how people see you?

The President. Well, that's an interesting question. Because people do have a lot of judgment about me, don't they? [*Laughter*] That's a great question, yes. When you grow up, when you're young, it is natural to care a lot about what your peers think of you. That's just human. And there's nothing wrong with that. That's part of how young people get socialized, is they are looking at how people are responding to them and taking it in. And when they get positive reinforcement, they do more of that. And when they get negative reinforcement, they do less of that. And that's just how we are. We're social animals.

But I do think that as you get older, part of what you have to determine is what's important to you—who are you, how do you want to live, what are the principles that you abide by, what are the kind of fixed foundations, what's the north star that steers you—so that when things happen that aren't always according to plan and when you have tough times and when you are struggling, what is it that's going to keep you going and keep your bearings.

And I think through trial and error and mistakes and self-reflection, over time, I've sort of figured out who I am and what's important to me and what I care about. And I try to stay focused on that. And that can come about in a lot of different ways. Some people come at it through their faith and God centers them. And some people come at it through their work, and they determine, this is what I think is important in terms of my work. There are different paths to it, but at some point, to be a man or a woman, to be an adult, to be a full-grown person, you have to move beyond just what other people think and you have to make a determination about what do you believe in.

Not just what's your opinion any given day—because folks have opinions about everything, and I change my mind about issues. There's times where I think one way, and then I get more evidence, new information comes in, and I say, oh, maybe I wasn't right about that, let me rethink this. So there's nothing wrong with changing your mind. But that's different from losing your sense of who you are

and what's important or just changing your mind because it's easier or expedient.

And what I try to do is be open minded to new facts, but stay pretty fixed in terms of what I think is important. I think, for example, it is really—this sounds corny—but I think it's really important to treat other people with kindness. So that's a basic principle that I've got. Now, I've got to translate that sometimes in very abstract ways. All right, well, what does that mean if you've got suffering children halfway across the world? What are my responsibilities to them and what—how does that translate into policy?

And sometimes, I've got tough choices because, on the one hand, I may want to help those children; on the other hand, I've got a bunch of young people I need to help here. And if I want to help those children, I may need to then deal with bad people who are hurting those kids, but that may involve the United States in the kind of conflicts that ultimately hurt some of our young men and women who I might have to send there. So there are complexities to it. It's hard. But I don't lose track of the fact that I think treating somebody with kindness, that's a core value of mine.

And then, I just don't watch TV. That's the other thing. [*Laughter*] That's—that also helps. That's not entirely true; I'm—I was teasing about that.

But I do think that one of the things, as you grow up, you start trying to figure out is who gives you constructive criticism because they're invested in the same things you are, but maybe can see some things you can't, versus folks who are just—what did somebody say—hating, somebody just hating, just haters. I won't go there, but—[*laughter*]—but people who maybe are providing less constructive criticism, where I can't really use it because no matter what I do, there may be something else that they're criticizing. The object of it is not to advance a goal.

And so one thing you should learn is, if somebody is being constructive in their criticism, usually they're not criticizing you, they're criticizing your actions and what you do and are giving you something specific. So, if a coach is coaching Chris and just says, you're a buster, you can't play, that's not constructive criticism. If they say, Chris, right now you're dribbling too much, and you need to move the ball around because then five guys are going to touch it and we'll have more motion, that becomes constructive criticism. Right?

Well, that's true in your lives as well. So you can usually tell—if somebody is being constructive, they're telling you something specific that you can change, that you can test to see if it's going to make things better. And if they can't, if all they're saying is, you're not worth nothing, then that's probably not something that you want to pay a lot of attention to. Does that make sense? All right.

Young man right here.

White House Iftar Dinner

Q. Hi. My name is Wayne Rucker, and I'm assistant crew leader at PowerCorps PHL, and I'm from Philadelphia. And my question is, I heard about the iftar that you have at the White House. Any of our members—all of our members, we've got some of our members who are working in the sun, and they're fasting, and they're pushing through to—one of the initiatives is to make the city greener. We wanted to know if—I wanted to know if we could come out, if we were invited to the iftar at the White House.

The President. Well, maybe next year. I only do it once a year.

Q. Oh, okay.

The President. But we appreciate you. What we try to do—for those of you who aren't familiar, the iftar is the breaking of fast during the month of Ramadan, which is a holy time for those of the Muslim faith. In the same way that we do Christmas celebrations and Hanukkah celebrations, every faith, what we try to do is to recognize that what makes this country great is we may have different faiths, but we all come together as one American family.

And so we hosted a dinner just—was it last week? It was last week. I lose track of time these days, because this is what happens when you get older, young men, so—[*laughter*]. But next year, we'll see if we can have somebody

from your organization. It was a wonderful dinner. The only problem is, is that in most areas where the Muslim faiths evolved, sunset is a lot earlier. When you start getting up north, these poor folks, it's 9 o'clock, they're starving. [*Laughter*] So it gets dark late.

But—yes, young man right here. Yes.

Q. My name is Vance—[*inaudible*]—I'm from the great State of Montana.

The President. It's a beautiful State.

Native American Culture/U.S. Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

Q. My question for you, Mr. President, is how is the United States Government helping American Indian people revitalize their language and culture? Because so many of our young men and boys don't know who they are because they've lost their culture and language, and the United States Government has tried so hard for the past 200 years to destroy that.

The President. Look, it's a great question. I—as you may be aware, I was at an Indian reservation in South Dakota recently. And I met with a group of young people—this is young men and women—wonderful young men and women. Just extraordinary. And I won't share with you exactly what they told me about their lives because it was private, and they really opened up. But I can tell you that it was heartbreaking to hear some of the stories, in part because you got a sense of what the history of the interaction between the United States Government and Native American peoples had done to the culture.

The Bible says, without vision, a people will perish. And what happens when you start losing your language and you start losing your culture and you don't have a sense of connections to ancestors and those memories that date back generations is, you start feeling adrift. And if you're living in a society that devalues that, then you start maybe devaluing yourself and internalizing some of those doubts.

Now, the good news is, what we started seeing—for example, at the powwow that existed at the reservation, there was a Lakota language school for little kids, starting very early. They were learning math and science and all the subjects, but they were also in an immersion school, essentially, in their own language to empower them.

And part of what I've been talking to Secretary Duncan about and Sally Jewell, who is the head of the Department of Interior, about is, how do we incorporate more effectively into the school curriculums, into social programs, et cetera, a recognition of the distinct cultures of these native peoples? Because if young people come up proud of their past, then they'll have a more powerful sense of direction going forward.

Now, one thing I have to just say about all this, though, is the world is what it is. It is a global world. We live in the 21st century. When I was up at the reservation, everybody had a cell phone. Everybody was—wanted to take selfies, like they always do. People were texting. And so you can't ignore what's happened. You can't just live in the past; you also have to look to the future, which means that all the young Native Americans are also going to have to learn math, science, computer sciences, engineering. There has to be an adaptation to what is increasingly a world culture, even as you are also then connecting it back to your roots. And sometimes, that's hard. Right?

And part of what's great about America is the way that we all take these different cultures and we make one culture out of it. And we shouldn't lose that. That is—we're not just a collection of Jews and Irish and Native American and Black, we're also Americans, so we have a common culture that binds us together. There's no contradiction between knowing your culture—the traditional cultures out of which your families come—but also being part of the larger culture.

And I think that one of the things—this is true not just for Native Americans, but it's also true for African Americans. Sometimes, African Americans, in communities where I've worked, there's the notion of "acting White," which sometimes is overstated, but there's an element of truth to it, where, okay, if boys are reading too much, then, well, why are you doing that? Or why are you speaking so properly?

[*Laughter*] And the notion that there's some authentic way of being Black, that if you're going to be Black, you have to act a certain way and wear a certain kind of clothes, that has to go. Because there are a whole bunch of different ways for African American men to be authentic.

Michelle, you look at Michelle, she grew up South Side. And her mom still lives in a neighborhood where gunshots go off, and it can be rough in—where Michelle grew up. But she'll talk proper when she needs to. Now, you also don't want to get on her wrong side, because she can translate that into a different vernacular. [*Laughter*]

But my point is, is that you don't have to act a certain way to be authentic. You just have to be who you are and to go back to the values that you care about: Are you kind? Are you responsible? Do you work hard? Can you delay gratification? Well, the same is true in the Native Americans' context. Right? We want to get past the idea that there's a certain way of being Native American. You need to know your culture, but you can also be part of this larger world.

And there are some cultures, frankly, who've done this better than others. I mean, I do think, for example, Jewish culture has been very powerful. If you look in this—in our society, the ability to transmit traditions through synagogues and the Torah and bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs so that people have a sense of 2,000 years of history, but everybody is still part of today and America and the world.

In many Asian American cultures, when they are part of—first-generation immigrant, they might have a whole separate set of classes on weekends or after school where they're learning their native tongues, the mother tongue, but they're still focused, when you're in school, this is how you're doing things.

So I think this is something that we have to spend some time thinking about: making sure that we understand there's a way of knowing your history, knowing your culture, being proud of it, using it as a strength, but not thinking that there's just one way of you then having to act. I think that's very important. All right.

Let me take a look here. How many more questions can I take, by the way? We've got one or two? All right, the—one or two. Let's see, I'm just looking around. You all look good; everybody looks good. I just want to make sure that everybody gets a chance here. This young man in the corner here with the glasses.

Washington, DC, Statehood

Q. Hi. My name is—[*inaudible*]. I'm representing the Asian American League today. And my question, what is your opinion on DC statehood?

The President. On DC statehood? [*Laughter*]

Q. Yes.

The President. Well, that's—I'm in DC, so I'm for it. [*Laughter*] No, look, I think I've long believed that DC pays taxes—folks in DC pay taxes like everybody else. They contribute to the overall well-being of the country like everybody else. They should be represented like everybody else. And it's not as if Washington, DC, is not big enough compared to other States. There has been a long movement to get DC statehood, and I've been for it for quite some time. The politics of it end up being difficult to get it through Congress, but I think it's absolutely the right thing to do.

All right, that was an easy one. Who else has got something? Let's see here. Oh, see, I know that—it's tempting for me to call on a young woman. You know what, I'm going to call on just—maybe she has a perspective that nobody else has. This young lady right here. Didn't you have your hand up? Okay, I wanted to make sure. Go ahead.

Q. My name is Jakesha Gray, and my question was——

The President. Why don't you give her the mike because it's hard for her to reach—but now you're promising you'll give it up.

Q. I promise. [*Laughter*]

The President. Okay.

The President Serving as Mentor

Q. Because you don't have any biological sons, what is the likelihood of you mentoring one of the young men in the programs?

The President. Well, it's not just one of the young men, we've got a whole mentor program that we're bringing—I'm going to be spending time with all of them because I'm going to spread myself a little thin with all of them.

The problem for just me taking one is, obviously, then all the other guys who are part of the program would be like, man, how did you get the President? [*Laughter*] So that would not be fair. Right? So I'm going to be spending time with all the guys who are mentoring in the White House.

I've got—these have both been short questions so I'm going to take a couple more. This young man in the blue shirt right here. This is one of our soon-to-be mentees at the White House.

The President's Advice on Achieving Goals

Q. My name is Jonathan Loraine. I'm from Burke, Virginia. My question is, what advice can you give us so that we can achieve our goals?

The President. Well, I'm going to be giving you a whole bunch of advice, so this won't be an exhaustive list, but I'll just start with a couple of things. Number one is: Work. It's a pretty simple concept. There is nothing worthwhile where it just falls in your lap. I mean, maybe once in a while, somebody wins the lottery, but for the most part, everything you do that's worthwhile requires work.

And we've got—you guys are all too young to remember, but we've got—Otis Birdsong here used to have one of the best jumpers in the NBA. He looks like he could still play. Otis, how many shots, when you were playing, how many shots would you take just, I don't know—thousands of shots, right? I mean, if you talk to Chris or Steph Curry or Ray Allen or any great shooter, they are taking thousands of shots a day, so that when the time comes to make a big shot, it is just muscle memory. It's all burned in. They had talent already, but they've worked.

Now, it's interesting, you talk to young people about basketball and they kind of understand that. They get that when it comes to sports. But for some reason, you think the same doesn't apply to school. There is no reason why you should think that you will be a good reader if you don't read a lot, and read books that are hard, as opposed to just books that are easy. There is no reason to think that you will be good at mathematics if you are not doing math problems and pushing yourself and trying math problems that are hard, not just ones that are easy. There's no reason why you think—you should think that you'll be well informed about world events if you aren't actually taking the time to read a newspaper once in a while and study what's happening around the world. So nothing you will do, if it's going to be worthwhile, doesn't involve some work.

And that includes, by the way, being good parents. Because I've got some friends who have still got young kids, and I'd forgotten—I was watching—my brother-in-law has got a—my nephews—I've got a 2-year-old and a 5-year-old. We call him Chairman of the Old Dads Club. He started again. And I'm watching them run around, and it's just exhausting. [*Laughter*] No, it's—small children are tiring. And being loving and attentive and staying focused on what's good for them and disciplining them when necessary and—that's hard work.

So work is number one. Number two is figure out what it is that you care about passionately, something that you think is important to you. Because if nothing is important to you, you're not going to put in the work.

Now, everybody has got different talents, and everybody has got different passions. And sometimes—part of the goal of "My Brother's Keeper" is to expose you to more things so that you don't think that the only thing you can be passionate about is what you're seeing on TV. And part of the problem with young men of color is oftentimes, the only thing they see to be passionate about is basketball or rap. And we want to make sure you get exposed to graphic design or you're exposed to engineering or you're exposed to being a lawyer so that maybe you will be passionate about that.

But the point is, those two things go hand in hand. If you find something you really care about, then that's also what you're going to really be willing to put a lot of work into, and

that's what you'll end up being good at. So that's goal number two.

And goal number three—or third thing—and I've got a longer list, but here's the third thing that's pretty important: Understand that you will not achieve by yourself, which means that you've got to be able to invest in relationships with other people who you can learn from, who will support you, who you will support in turn. And if you learn how to be somebody who is a good teammate, who is connected and is thinking not just about yourself, but about others as well, and they then respond to that by wanting to help you because you've shown yourself to be reliable or trustworthy or having somebody else's back, you then build a network for yourself. And that increases your capacity to get things done.

There are a handful of people who can do things on their own. But even geniuses, even folks who are the best of the best at whatever they do, generally speaking, there—when you look at it you find out there's a whole bunch of people behind them that have allowed them to succeed the way that they have. And that's part of what "My Brother's Keeper" needs to be, is just one more tool that you have to expand your network of people who can support you, give you ideas, buck you up when you're down, open doors for you.

Of course, the flip side is, though, you can't just take, you've also got to give. So you've got to show enthusiasm. You've got to want to be involved. You've got to be curious. You're going to have to ask questions. If you have a mentor, you've got to show up on time. If somebody is putting time into you, you've got to show appreciation for it and do your hardest to achieve.

Same thing with teachers. I don't care how bad your school is, there's a teacher in there somewhere who, if you went up to her or him and said, I really want to learn, can you help me, that teacher would snatch you up in a second, because they want to feel like they're doing a good job. But if you're just sitting in the back of the class slouching and complaining about how bad the school is, well, then you may be right to be angry that you don't have enough school supplies or the building is bad or what have you, but it's not going to help you. You're not going to learn.

So you've got to be able to give as well as to take. And if you learn that, those three things—work, have a passion about something, and learn how to give and take with people so that you're part of a broader team—that's a good place to start. Then I'll give you the other 20 things you've got to do. [*Laughter*] All right?

Everybody, I've got to get going. I want to say to everybody who's been involved—the school administrators who are here, the mayors who are here, the NBA, the companies, the mentors and businesses who have already set up mentorship programs, and most of all, the young people—I am very excited about this. I am proud of this. This is not something that is just a one-off that's going to happen one time and then we're done. This is a movement that we're trying to build over the next year, 5 years, 10 years, so that we can look back and say we were part of something that reversed some trends that we don't want to see.

We want fewer young men in jail, we want more of them in college. We want fewer young men on the streets, we want more in the boardrooms. We want everybody to have a chance to succeed in America. And it's possible if we've got the kind of team that we've set up today.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Christopher E. Paul, point guard, National Basketball Association's Los Angeles Clippers; Bernadeia H. Johnson, superintendent, Minneapolis Public Schools; Otis L. Birdsong, former shooting guard, NBA's Kansas City Kings; Wardell S. Curry II, point guard, NBA's Golden State Warriors; Walter R. Allen, Jr., shooting guard, NBA's Miami Heat. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson, and nephews Aaron and Austin Robinson.

Remarks on Presenting the Medal of Honor to Staff Sergeant Ryan M. Pitts
July 21, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to the White House. Please be seated, please be seated.

For our forces in Afghanistan, the battle of Wanat was one of the most fierce of this entire war. Forty-eight Americans, along with their Afghan partners, were manning their small base, deep in a valley when they were attacked by some 200 insurgents. And those insurgents seemed determined to overrun an even smaller post just outside the base, an elevated patch of boulders and sandbags defended by just nine American soldiers.

Soon, under the relentless fire, all nine of those men were wounded or killed. Insurgents broke through the wire. And that little post was on the verge of falling, giving the enemy a perch from which to devastate the base below. Against that onslaught, one American held the line: just 22 years old, nearly surrounded, bloodied but unbowed, the soldier we recognize today with our Nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor, Staff Sergeant Ryan M. Pitts.

Now, I don't want to embarrass Ryan, but the character he displayed that day was clearly forged early. I'm told that in kindergarten, when asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, he drew a picture of a soldier. When he was in the fifth grade, his teacher sent home a note that described Ryan in words that would be familiar to all those who knew him today: Ryan, she wrote, is "a very special human being."

In Ryan Pitts you see the humility and the loyalty that define America's men and women in uniform. Of this medal, he says: "It's not mine alone. It belongs to everybody who was there that day because we did it together."

So I want to welcome those who were there that day, Ryan's brothers-in-arms, and those who welcoming—are going to be welcoming him into their ranks, the members of the Medal of Honor Society. We are very proud of them, and we are honored by the presence of the families of our fallen heroes as well.

We welcome Ryan's family, many from New Hampshire, including his wonderful wife Amy. I have to take a pause because they are actually celebrating—Ryan and Amy—their second anniversary today. [*Laughter*] As Ryan put it, it's going to be tough topping this one, as anniversaries go. [*Laughter*] But let me just give you a piece of advice as somebody who now has been married for over 20 years: You should try. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying, don't rest on your laurels after just 2 years. [*Laughter*]

We welcome their gorgeous son, 1-year-old Lucas, who Ryan is beginning to teach a love for all things New England—of course, the Red Sox and the Bruins and the Celtics and the Pats.

I want you to try and imagine the extraordinary circumstances in which Ryan and his team served. This was the summer of 2008, and this was a time when our forces in Afghanistan were stretched thin and our troops were deployed to isolated outposts. They had just arrived in Wanat just days before, and they were still building their very small base, a handful of armored vehicles and fighting positions and foxholes and sandbags.

Wanat, one report later concluded, had "significant vulnerabilities." Parts of the village sat on higher ground. On every side, mountains soared 10,000 feet into the sky. Heavy equipment to help build their defenses was delayed. In the 100-degree heat the soldiers ran low on water. And the aerial surveillance they were counting on was diverted away to other missions.

Early that morning, in the predawn darkness, they spotted several men up the mountains. But before Ryan and his team could take action, the entire valley erupted. Machine-gun fire and mortar and rocket-propelled grenades poured down from every direction. And those 200 insurgents were firing from ridges and from the village and from trees. Down at the base, a vehicle exploded, scattering its missiles back at our soldiers. It was, said a soldier, "hell on Earth."

Up at their tiny post, Ryan and his team were being pounded. Almost instantly, every one of them was wounded. Ryan was hit by shrapnel in the arm and both legs and was bleeding badly. Already, three American soldiers in that valley had fallen. And then a fourth.

As the insurgents moved in, Ryan picked up a grenade, pulled the pin, and held that live grenade—for a moment, then another, then another—finally hurling it so they couldn't throw it back. And he did that again. And he did it again.

Unable to stand, Ryan pulled himself up on his knees and manned a machine gun. Soldiers from the base below made a daring run, dodging bullets and explosions, and joined the defense. But now the enemy was inside the post, so close they were throwing rocks at the Americans, so close they came right up to the sandbags. Eight American soldiers had now fallen, and Ryan Pitts was the only living soldier at that post.

The enemy was so close Ryan could hear their voices. He whispered into the radio, he was the only one left and was running out of ammo. "I was going to die," he remembers, "and made my peace with it." And then, he prepared to make a last stand. Bleeding and barely conscious, Ryan threw his last grenades. He grabbed a grenade launcher and fired nearly straight up so the grenade came back down on the enemy just yards away. One insurgent was now right on top of the post, shooting down until another team of Americans showed up and drove him back. As one of his teammates said, had it not been for Ryan Pitts, that post "almost certainly would have been overrun."

Even with reinforcements, the battle was not over. Another wave of rocket-propelled grenades slammed into the post. Nine Americans were now gone. And still the fighting raged. Ryan worked the radio, helping target the air strikes that were hitting "danger close," just yards away. And with those strikes, the tide of the battle began to turn. Eventually, the insurgents fell back. Ryan and his fellow soldiers had held their ground.

This medal, Ryan says, is an opportunity to tell "our" story. "There was valor everywhere," according to Ryan. And so today we also pay tribute to all who served with such valor that day. Shielding their wounded buddies with their own bodies. Picking up unexploded missiles with their hands and carrying them away. Running through the gunfire to reinforce that post. Fighting through their injuries and never giving up. Helicopter pilots and medevac crews who came in under heavy fire. Said one soldier, "Never in my career have I seen such bravery and sacrifice."

And so I would ask all those who served at Wanat—on the ground and in the air—to please stand, those of you who are here today.

Most of all, Ryan says he considers this medal "a memorial for the guys who didn't come home." So today we honor nine American soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice for us all.

The son who "absorbed love like a sponge," the expectant father whose dream would later come true, a beautiful baby girl—Specialist Sergio Abad.

The boy who dominated the soccer fields, fell in love with motorcycles and, there in that remote outpost, took a direct hit in the helmet and kept on fighting—Corporal Jonathan Ayers.

The photographer whose beautiful pictures captured the spirit of the Afghan people, and who wrote to his family, "Afghanistan is exactly [where] . . . I wanted to be"—Corporal Jason Bogar.

The father who loved surfing with his son, the platoon leader who led a dash through the gunfire to that post to reinforce his men—First Lieutenant Jonathan Brostrom.

An immigrant from Mexico who became a proud American soldier, on his third tour, whose final thoughts were of his family and his beloved wife Lesly—Sergeant Israel Garcia.

A young man of deep faith, who served God and country, who could always get a laugh with his impersonation of his commander—Corporal Jason Hovater.

The husband who couldn't wait to become an uncle, the adventurous spirit who in every

photo from Afghanistan has a big smile on his face—Corporal Matthew Phillips.

The big guy with an even bigger heart, a prankster whose best play was cleaning up at the poker table with his buddies and his dad—Corporal Pruitt Rainey.

And the youngest, just 20 years old, the "little brother" of the platoon, who loved to play guitar, and who, says his dad, did everything in his life with passion—Corporal Gunnar Zwilling.

These American patriots lived to serve us all. They died to protect each of us. And their legacy lives on in the hearts of all who love them still, especially their families: mothers, fathers, wives, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters.

To you, their families, I know no words can match the depth of your loss, but please know that this Nation will honor your soldiers now and forever. And I would ask the Gold Star families from that deployment to please stand, including Ali Kahler, age 11, and Jase Brostrom, who this week turns 12. Please stand.

This is the story Ryan wants us to remember: soldiers who loved each other like brothers and who fought for each other and families who have made a sacrifice that our Nation must never forget. Ryan says, "I think we owe it to them to live lives worthy of their sacrifice." And he's absolutely right.

As Commander in Chief, I believe one of the ways we can do that is by heeding the lessons of Wanat. When this Nation sends our troops into harm's way, they deserve a sound strategy and a well-defined mission. And they deserve the forces and support to get the job done. And that's what we owe soldiers like Ryan and all the comrades that were lost. That's how we can truly honor all those who gave their lives that day. That's how, as a nation, we can remain worthy of their sacrifice.

I know that's a view that's shared by our Secretary of Defense and by our Joint Chiefs of Staff and all the leadership here. They're hard lessons, but they're ones that are deeply engrained in our hearts.

It is remarkable that we have young men and women serving in our military who, day in, day out, are able to perform with so much integrity, so much humility, and so much courage. Ryan represents the very best of that tradition, and we are very, very proud of him, as we are of all of you.

So God bless you, Ryan. God bless all who serve in our name. May God continue to bless the United States of America.

And with that, I would like our military aide to please complete the ceremony.

[*At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Timothy J. Myers, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citation. The President then presented the medal, assisted by Lt. Col. Michael P. Wagner, USA, Army Aide to the President.*]

It's not bad to stand up on this one. [*Applause*]

[*Maj. Gen. Donald L. Rutherford, USA, Army Chief of Chaplains, said a prayer.*]

Well, that concludes the official part of the ceremony, but we still have a big anniversary party. [*Laughter*] The White House, I understand, has prepared some pretty good edibles and some beverages. And so I hope everybody enjoys the reception.

I want to once again thank all who served and the families of those who served. You make us proud every single day. And to Ryan and Amy and Lucas, we wish you all the very best because what an extraordinary family you have. And the pleasures of family were hard-earned by this young man.

All right. Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:11 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lorelai R. Abad, daughter of Pfc. Sergio S. Abad, USA; Frankie Gay, father of Cpl. Pruitt A. Rainey, USA; Kurt Zwilling, father of Cpl. Gunnar W. Zwilling, USA; and Jase Brostrom, son of 1st Lt. Jonathan P. Brostrom, USA. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citation.

Remarks on Signing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
July 22, 2014

Vice President Joe Biden. Good afternoon, everyone. Great to be here. Please, thank you very much. Thank you, distinguished Members of Congress and members of labor and business and the community. Today, as the President signs the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, we're using this occasion also to present to the President a roadmap he asked—requested in the State of the Union message, how to keep and maintain the highest skilled workforce in the world. And this is a perfect build-on as to what the bipartisan consensus that the Congress recently reached.

I had the best partners in preparing this report that I could ask for: Tom Perez at Labor, Penny Pritzker at Commerce, and Arne Duncan at the Department of Education. I talked to Governors, mayors, industry leaders, presidents of community colleges and colleges, unions, and a lot of Members of Congress, many of whom are here. And I have to acknowledge at the out front—at the outset, my wife Jill has been an incredible advocate for community colleges and the role they play in training the workforce.

But most importantly, I spoke with an awful lot of Americans who are—as all of you have, particularly Members of Congress—who were hit exceedingly hard by the great recession, but are doing everything that they possibly can to find a job, willing to learn new skills in order to have a decent, middle class job. One thing I hope that's been put to rest—and I know we all share this view—Americans want to work. They want to work. They're willing to do anything that they need to do to get a good and decent job.

And they show us that our single greatest resource is not—and it's not hyperbole—remains the American people. They're the most highly skilled workers in the world and the most capable people in the world. And they're in the best position to learn the new skills of the 21st century that the workforce requires. There's that phrase, "All has changed, changed utterly." Well, all has changed. It's a different world in which people are competing in order to get the kind of jobs they need, whether it's in advanced manufacturing or clean energy or information technology or health care, all areas that are booming, all areas where America is back.

So the core question that we set out to answer—and I'm sure my colleagues did as well—was how do you connect? How do you connect these workers who desperately want a job, who will do all they need to do to qualify, how do you connect them with jobs? How do Americans know what skills employers need? It sounds like a silly question, but how do they know? And how do they get these skills once they know what skills are needed for the job? And where? Where do they go to get those jobs?

This report is designed to help answer those extremely practical questions. It includes 50 actions that the Federal Government and our outside partners are taking now to help fill this skill gap—skills gap. There is this new strategy that we think will lead directly to more middle class jobs. These actions are going to help promote partnerships between educational institutions and workforce institutions. They're going to increase apprenticeships, and—which will allow folks to learn and earn while they learn. And it will empower job seekers and employers with better data on what jobs are available and what skills are needed to fill those jobs.

[*Vice President Biden continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

But to seize this moment, we need to keep the world's most skilled workforce here in America. And I think today in this bipartisan group, we're ready. The American people are ready. And I know the man I'm about to introduce is ready. He wakes up every morning trying to figure out, how do we give ordinary Americans an opportunity? Again, this is just about opportunity, man. Simple opportunity,

how do we give them—because they—an opportunity because they are so exceptional.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think everyone in this room shares that goal: providing for opportunity. And the man I'm about to introduce, that's all he talks about, it seems to me, when he talks to me.

Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States, Barack Obama.

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, please be seated. Thank you. Well, welcome to the White House, everybody. And I want to thank Joe for the generous introduction, but more importantly, for everything he does, day in, day out, on behalf of American workers. And I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here from both parties who led the effort to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act.

When President Clinton signed the original Workforce Investment Act back in 1998, he said it was "a big step forward in making sure that every adult can keep on learning for a lifetime." And he was right. The law became a pillar of American job training programs. It's helped millions of Americans earn the skills they need to find a new job or get a better paying job.

But even back then, even in 1998, our economy was changing. The notion that a high school education could get you a good job and that you'd keep that job until retirement wasn't a reality for the majority of people. Advances in technologies made some jobs obsolete. Global competition sent other jobs overseas. And then, as we were coming into office, the great recession pulled the rug out from under millions of hard-working families.

Now, the good news is, today, nearly 6 years after the financial crisis, our businesses have added nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. Manufacturing is adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. The unemployment rate is at its lowest point since September of 2008, by the way, the fastest 1-year drop in nearly 30 years. There are now more job openings than at any time since 2007, prerecession. For the first time in a decade, as Joe mentioned, business leaders around the world have declared that the number-one place to do business, the number-one place to invest isn't China, it's the United States of America.

So thanks to the hard work of the American people and some decent policies, our economy has recovered faster and it has gone farther than most other advanced nations. As Joe said, we are well positioned. We've got the best cards. So we have the opportunity right now to extend the lead we already have, to encourage more companies to join the trend and bring jobs home, to make sure that the gains aren't just for folks at the very top, but that the economy works for every single American. If you're working hard, you should be able to get a job, that job should pay well, and you should be able to move forward, look after your family.

Opportunity for all. And that means that even as we're creating new jobs in this new economy, we have to make sure that every American has the skills to fill those jobs. And keep in mind, not every job that's a good job out there needs a 4-year degree, but the ones that don't need a college degree generally need some sort of specialized training.

Now, last month, I met just a wonderful young woman named Rebekah in Minnesota. A few years ago, she was waiting tables. Her husband lost his job; he was a carpenter doing construction work. He had to figure out how to scramble and get a new job that paid less. She chose to take out student loans, she enrolled in a community college, she retrained for a new career. Today, not only has her husband been able to get back into construction, but she loves her job as an accountant, started a whole new career. And the question then is, how do we give more workers that chance to adapt, to revamp, retool, so that they can move forward in this new economy?

In 2011, I called on Congress to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act, update it for the 21st century. And I want to thank every single lawmaker who is here—lawmakers from both parties—who answered that call. It took some compromising, but you know what? It turns out, compromise sometimes is okay. Folks in Congress got past their differences, and they got a bill to my desk. So this is not a

win for Democrats or Republicans. It is a win for American workers. It's a win for the middle class. And it's a win for everybody who is fighting to earn their way into the middle class.

So the bill I'm about to sign will give communities more certainty to invest in job training programs for the long run. It will help us bring those programs into the 21st century by building on what we know works based on evidence, based on tracking what actually delivers on behalf of folks who enroll in these programs: more partnerships with employers, more tools to measure performance, more flexibilities for States and cities to innovate and to run their workforce programs in ways that are best suited for their particular demographic and their particular industries. And as we approach the 24th anniversary of the ADA, this bill takes new steps to support Americans with disabilities who want to live and work independently. So there's a lot of good stuff in here.

Of course, as Joe said, there is still more that we can do. And that's why we've rallied employers to give long-term unemployed a fair shot. It's why we're using $600 million in Federal grants to encourage companies to offer apprenticeships and work directly with community colleges. It's why, in my State of Union Address this year, I asked Joe to lead an across-the-board review of America's training programs to make sure that they have one mission: train Americans with the skills employers actually need, then match them to good jobs that need to be filled right now.

So today I'm directing my Cabinet—even as we're signing the bill—to implement some of Joe's recommendations. First, we're going to use the funds and programs we already have in a smarter way. Federal agencies will award grants that move away from what our Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, who has been working very hard on this, what he calls a "train and pray" approach, and I'll bet a lot of you who have dealt with folks who are unemployed know that—know what that means. They enroll, they get trained for something, they're not even sure whether the job is out there, and if the job isn't out there, all they're doing is saddling themselves with debt, oftentimes putting themselves in a worse position. What we want to do is make sure where you train your workers first based on what employers are telling you they're hiring for. Help business design the training programs so that we're creating a pipeline into jobs that are actually out there.

Number two, training programs that use Federal money will be required to make public how many of its graduates find jobs and how much they earn. And that means workers, as they're shopping around for what's available, they'll know in advance if they can expect a good return on their investment. Every job seeker should have all the tools they need to take their career into their own hands, and we're going to help make sure they can do that.

And finally, we're going to keep investing in new strategies and innovations that help keep pace with a rapidly changing economy. From testing new, faster ways of teaching skills like coding and cybersecurity and welding to giving at-risk youth the chance to learn on the job, we will keep making sure that Americans have the chance to build their careers throughout a lifetime of hard work.

So the bill I'm signing today and the actions I'm taking today will connect more ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs. Of course, there is so much more that we can still do. And I'm looking forward to engaging all the Members of Congress and all the businesses and non-for-profits who worked on this issue. I'm really interested in engaging them, see what else we can get going.

I'll give you a couple of examples. Our high school graduation rate is the highest on record. More young people are earning their college degrees than ever before. But we still have work to do to make college more affordable and lift the burden of student loan debt. I acted to give nearly 5 million Americans the opportunity to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their income, particularly important for those who were choosing careers that aren't as lucrative. But Congress could help millions more, and I'd like to work with you on that.

Minimum wage. This week marks 5 years since the last increase in the minimum wage.

More and more States and business owners are raising their workers' wages. I did the same thing for Federal contractors. I'd like to work with Congress to see if we can do the same for about 28 million Americans, give Americans a raise right now.

Fair pay. Let's make sure the next generation of women are getting a fair deal. Let's make sure the next generation of good manufacturing jobs are made in America. Let's make it easier, not harder, for companies to bring those jobs back home. Tomorrow Senators will get to vote on the "Bring Jobs Home Act." Instead of rewarding companies for shipping jobs overseas or rewarding companies that are moving profits offshore, let's create jobs right here in America, and let's encourage those companies.

So let's build on what both parties have already done on many of these issues. Let's see if we can come together, and while we're at it, let's fix an immigration system that is currently broken in a way that strengthens our borders and that we know will be good for business, we know will increase our GDP, we know will drive down our deficit.

So I want to thank all the Democrats and Republicans here today for getting this bill done. This is a big piece of work. You can see, it's a big bill. [*Laughter*] But I'm also inviting you back. Let's do this more often. It's so much fun. [*Laughter*] Let's pass more bills to help create more good jobs, strengthen the middle class. Look at everybody. Everybody is smiling, everybody feels good. [*Laughter*] We could be doing this all the time. [*Laughter*]

Our work can make a real difference in the lives of real Americans. That's why we're here. We'll have more job satisfaction. [*Laughter*] The American people, our customers, they'll feel better about the product we produce.

And back in 1998, when President Clinton signed the original Workforce Investment Act into law, he was introduced by a man named Jim Antosy from Reading, Pennsylvania. And Jim spoke about how he had been laid off in 1995 at age 49, two kids, no college degree. With the help of job training programs, he earned his bachelor's degree in computer science, found a new job in his field.

Today, Jim and his wife Barb still live in Reading. Over the past 16 years, he's been steadily employed as a programmer, working his way up from contractor to full-time employee. In just a few months, Jim now is planning to retire after a lifetime of hard work. A job training program made a difference in his life. And one thing he's thinking about doing in his retirement is teaching computer science at the local community college so he can help a new generation of Americans earn skills that lead directly to a job, just like he had the opportunity to do.

Well, I ran for President because I believe even in a changing economy, even in a changing world, stories like Jim aren't just possible, they should be the norm. Joe believes the same thing. Many of you believe the same thing. I believe America is—I don't just believe—I know America is full of men and women who work very hard and live up to their responsibilities, and all they want in return is to see that hard work pay off, that responsibility rewarded.

They're not greedy. They're not looking for the Moon. They just want to be able to know that if they work hard, they can find a job, they can look after their families, they can retire with dignity, they're not going to go bankrupt when they get sick, maybe take a vacation once in a while, nothing fancy. That's what they're looking for, because they know that ultimately, what's important is family and community and relationships. And that's possible. That's what America is supposed to be about. That's what I'm fighting for every single day as President.

This bill will help move us along that path. We need to do it more. Let's get together, work together, restore opportunity for every single American. So with that, I'd like to invite up some of the outstanding folks who are sitting in the audience who helped make this happen. And I'm going to sign this bill with all those pens. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:31 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of

the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to St. Anthony, MN, resident Rebekah Erler and her husband Ben Erler. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the complete remarks of Vice President Biden. H.R. 803, approved July 22, was assigned Public Law No. 113–128.

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters at the Netherlands Embassy After Signing a Condolence Book for Victims of the Crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17

July 22, 2014

Q. Mr. President, Dutch television, do you have any message for the Dutch people?

The President. Obviously, we're all heartbroken by what's happened. And this is an opportunity for me to extend, on behalf of all the American people, our deepest condolences over the loss of family and friends, to express our solidarity with the people of the Netherlands, with whom we've been friends and had the deepest ties for centuries, and to assure the Dutch people that we will work with them to make sure that loved ones are recovered, that a proper investigation is conducted, and that ultimately, justice is done.

Deputy Chief of Mission Peter Mollema. And we thank the President for being here. There's been an outpouring of support from the American people, and I can only say that on behalf of the Dutch people, we're deeply grateful for what you are doing. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:26 a.m.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Seattle, Washington

July 22, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! Thank you so much. Well, first of all, everybody, give Libby a big round of applause. Libby is the same age as Malia, and it turns out that they're both learning how to drive. So we are—Bruce and Ann and I share some concern. [*Laughter*] But they seem like sensible young ladies, so we're hoping that everything goes smoothly this summer.

It is so wonderful to see everybody. There are just a couple people I want to acknowledge. First of all, obviously, for Bruce and Ann to have me back in their house and the whole family here, they've been such great friends and great supporters. So can everybody please just say thank you to them. And we are very grateful to them.

Jay Inslee was here, along with Trudi. They skipped ahead because we're doing something else. But give them a round of applause anyway. You can tell them later that we appreciate them.

Your outstanding mayor, Ed Murray, is here. And County Executive Dow Constantine is here. Dow, by the way, is a new dad—10-week-old daughter. *Mazel tov*. You can't beat daughters. [*Laughter*] You can't—sons, you're okay. [*Laughter*]

Let me start just by talking about something that is obviously of great concern to the people of Washington, and that's the forest fires that have been sweeping across a big chunk of the State. As I was driving over here, I had a chance to talk to the Governor and get a full briefing on what's happened. Obviously, these are very difficult fires. Our firefighters take such risks and sacrifice so much to fight them, but it's a big challenge—and State troopers as well. And we actually lost a State trooper as he was trying to clear out from a fire that was tak-

ing place there—a former marine—and I had a chance to speak with his widow and offer our condolences.

So what we've done is to make sure that we are coordinating as best we can with the Federal—or with the State and local officials. We were able to get on the phone—my director of FEMA, Craig Fugate—and we were able to authorize today an emergency declaration when it comes to electrical power, which is one of the most immediate concerns, and then we're going to be working with the State on additional declarations that may need to take place. But I just want to make sure that everybody knows that we are going to be thinking about and then helping people who are being severely affected by these fires.

It is also important to know that I've been talking to Western Governors generally about the issue of forest fires, because although any given year, you can't definitively talk about weather patterns and attribute them to a particular source, what is clear is, the trend lines indicate the potential for increased forest fires. We've seen the budget for forest fires jump at an extraordinary pace over the last several years, so much so that we're going to have to call on Congress to change how we fund forest fires. And a lot of that has to do with drought. A lot of it has to do with changing precipitation patterns. And a lot of that has to do with climate change.

And so I raise that because in all the day-to-day challenges that we face that are extraordinarily important, a long-term challenge that has to be dealt with right now is making sure that the planet works for the next generation and the generation after that. And so we're very proud of the work we're doing right now with our Climate Action Plan to make sure that we're building resilience. And that's what we're talking with a lot of Western Governors about: How can we start adapting our infrastructure to what are already increases in temperature, but then also what can we do to mitigate the damage that's happening in climate change?

All of which brings me to why we're gathered here today, in addition to the nice views. [*Laughter*] When I came into office, we were facing the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. In fact, the contraction was actually technically more severe than the Great Depression's. The difference is, is that we responded faster. The American people responded with extraordinary resilience. And so, if you look at the last 5 years, we've now had 52 straight months of job growth. We've created 10 million jobs. The unemployment rate is the lowest since 2007. [*Laughter*] We've seen the biggest drop in the unemployment rate in 30 years just this past year. Even the long-term unemployed, which has been a chronic problem, they're starting to be able to get back to work. There are more job openings now than there have been since 2007.

You look at some of the other trends—obviously, the stock market is up, which is not just good for Wall Street, it's also good for a lot of 401(k) holders, who remember how scared they were back in 2009 and 2010. We have seen U.S. companies do extraordinarily well, not just here, but around the world. Exports on the rise. Our deficits have been cut by more than half. Our energy production has been extraordinary. We're now producing more oil in the United States than we are importing, and that's the first time that's happening in a couple of decades. Our natural gas production makes us the leading producer in the world and has skyrocketed. But in addition, when it comes to clean energy, we've tripled the amount of wind power that we have, increased solar power by tenfold, all of which has contributed to the biggest reductions in carbon pollution of any advanced country on Earth.

And so we've made enormous progress across the board on a whole range of fronts, from an auto industry that's come back and is now going to be doubling its fuel efficiency standards to the fact that our high school dropout rate has been reduced. College attendance is in record highs. There are a lot of reasons for optimism. And by the way, there's this one other thing: There are millions of people now who have health care that didn't have it before. And that includes people right here in Washington State.

Audience members. Thank you!

The President. And yet, despite all this, people are anxious. Now, some of that has to do with some big challenges overseas. I am very proud that we have ended one war, and by the end of this year, we will have ended both wars that I inherited before I came into office. But whether people see what's happening in Ukraine, and Russia's aggression towards its neighbors in the manner in which it's financing and arming separatists; to what's happened in Syria, the devastation that Asad has wrought on his own people; to the failure in Iraq for Sunni and Shia and Kurd to compromise, although we're trying to see if we can put together a government that actually can function; to ongoing terrorist threats; to what's happening in Israel and Gaza—part of people's concern is just the sense that around the world, the old order isn't holding, and we're not quite yet to where we need to be in terms of a new order that's based on a different set of principles, that's based on a sense of common humanity, that's based on economies that work for all people.

But here in the United States, what people are also concerned about is the fact that although the economy has done well in the aggregate, for the average person, it feels as if incomes, wages just haven't gone up; that people, no matter how hard they work, they feel stuck. And that's not an illusion. Because what's happened is, is that a lot of our gains, a lot of the progress that's been made in this economy—and this is, like, a 20-, 25-, 30-year trend—have gone to the folks at the very top. And middle class families find themselves with stagnant incomes, even as the cost of health care or the cost of a college education for their kids keeps on skyrocketing.

And part of what people are also anxious about is the fact that government doesn't seem to be responsive, at least at the Federal level, to those concerns. Things in Congress feel broken. And that's why so many people end up feeling cynical, and they feel that, you know what, it doesn't really make any difference—whether it's Democrats, Republicans—nobody is looking out for us. Nobody is thinking about our lives and how maybe we can just get a little help. We're willing to work hard, we are responsible, we're looking after our families, but who's there when things are a little tough or we need to go over a hump, who's there to give us a hand up?

Audience members. You are!

The President. And so—and part of what happens then is, is that people get cynical. And when people get cynical, they withdraw. And you get a spiral effect, a negative spiral in which special interests and those who are most vested in the status quo end up having more power, and people who really need government to work for them, on their behalf, they withdraw, they opt out. And that makes government even more dysfunctional.

So my job every single day is to make sure that people around the country who are working hard and doing the right thing, they know somebody is fighting for them. And that's something that we've been doing with Congress, wherever possible. Today we actually signed a bill. It was shocking. [*Laughter*] I said to the—it was a bipartisan bill. Republicans and Democrats passed it. I said, doesn't this feel good? [*Laughter*] Let's do this again. [*Laughter*] We can do it on immigration reform, or we can do it on the minimum wage, and we can do it on infrastructure spending.

But—uh-oh, see, you guys got us too excited. What happened, everybody? Do we have a backup mike, WHCA? Can you hear me back there?

Audience members. Yeah!

Audience member. There's one behind you.

The President. There's one behind me? You think that might work? [*Laughter*] Might as well try it, right? Testing, one, two, three. Testing, one, two, three. All right, let's try this one. Good idea. [*Laughter*] How's that? No? It was still a good idea, though. Testing, testing. WHCA?

That's all right. You know what? There weren't always mikes around.

Audience member. We can hear you!

The President. You can hear me.

So we passed a bill. So, wherever I can make progress with Congress, I want to do it. Because right now there are a whole bunch of

things we can do that should not be partisan. We should be willing, as Democrats and Republicans, to work together to rebuild our roads, our bridges, our airports, a smart grid, all of which would put people to work right now, but would also lay the foundation for economic development in this country for years to come. We should be able to do that. We should be able to help working families who desperately need help on childcare and early childhood education. That's something that shouldn't be partisan.

Every study shows if you invest a buck in early childhood education, you get $7 back. [*Inaudible*] That's something we shouldn't be doing on a bipartisan basis. When it comes to increasing the minimum wage, 28 million people we could pull out of poverty potentially just by increasing the minimum wage. And when people have money to spend in their pockets, folks at the bottom of the economic ladder, that money gravitates up. It means businesses——

[*At this point, the President was given a new microphone.*]

The President. Oh, thank you. [*Laughter*] Testing, one, two, three.

It means businesses have more customers. And you get a virtuous cycle going up. So there are a bunch of things that we know the American people agree with. Immigration reform, we know that it would make the economy stronger, it would drive down the deficit. You would have 11 million people who can come out of the shadows, pay taxes, pay a fine, and then now are able to live out the American Dream, because this has always been a nation of immigrations as well as a nation of laws.

We know how to solve some of our big problems. But what we're going to have to do is break the logjam in Washington. So where I'm able to get Congress to help, I want to work with them. Where I can't get Congress to help, I'm going to do everything I can on my own—[*applause*]—everything I can on my own. If they don't want to pass a sensible climate change bill, we're going to go ahead and put forward a Climate Action Plan and make sure we're working with the EPA under authorities we already have to reduce carbon.

If they don't want to do something on the minimum wage, at least we can make sure that Federal contractors are paying their workers a minimum wage, in the same way that we can make sure Federal contractors are not discriminating against the LGBT community. You should not have to worry about being fired just because of who you love. The same way that we can make sure that, with respect to Federal contractors, that if women are being paid less than men, they should be able to find out about it and do something about it. Because I believe that when women succeed, America succeeds. And I've got a couple of daughters; the idea that they would be paid less than men infuriates me if they're doing the same job. And I think it does for most Americans.

These should be partisan issues. If Congress can't act, we're going to go ahead and act.

Audience member. Spirit of a—[*inaudible*].

The President. There you go. A Hawaiian girl here. [*Laughter*]

But here is the key part for all of you: There are some issues that without Congress we can't solve the way we need to. Only Congress has power of the purse. We can't make sure that everybody across the country has access to affordable childcare without congressional action. We can do some things, but we can't do everything. We can't make sure everybody benefits from a minimum wage, even though States and cities like Seattle are doing the right thing, but there are a whole bunch of folks who don't live in Seattle. Without Congress, we're going to have problems. We can make college loans somewhat more affordable, but with congressional action, we could be doing so much more.

And so the reason you are here today and the reason I'm here today is because I want a Congress that can actually get the job down. I want a Congress that is serious about you. Not serious about their jobs, but serious about your jobs. Not serious about their quality of life, but serious about your quality of life. That's what we're fighting for.

And that's why these midterm elections are so important. I do not want anybody here to succumb to cynicism. Cynicism is a choice, and hope is a better choice. But in order for us to make hope live, in order for hope to be more than just a slogan, we've got to work. We've got to work to make sure that Members of Congress—whether the Senate or the House of Representatives—are serious about you. And I will say, for all the Democrats around here, I'm not overly partisan.

The truth is, my favorite President is the first Republican President. He's a guy named Abraham Lincoln. [*Laughter*] If you look at historically, Dwight Eisenhower built the Interstate Highway System, and Richard Nixon founded the EPA. And historically, we have had bipartisan cooperation on big issues. The problem is not the Republican Party per se, the problem is this particular group right now—[*laughter*]—that have kind of gone off the rails. And what we need is people who are serious about solving problems and believe in the possibilities of government not solving every problem, but solving some problems; not solving every problem 100 percent, but maybe solving some problems 50 percent.

We can do that. That is achievable. But it requires the level of participation that, so far, at least, Democrats don't always display. We are very good on Presidential elections; I can testify to that. [*Laughter*] But sometimes, during midterms we get lazy, and our folks don't turn out. That's going to have to change in this election, and that's why your help today is so important.

Let me just close by saying this, because I think about Libby, and I think about Malia, and I think about the next generation. Sometimes, when you're watching the news—which I generally don't do because I—[*laughter*]—whatever they're reporting on, I usually know about. [*Laughter*] But it can get depressing, right? It can feel as if, oh, nothing is working and everything is a crisis. And when I talk to interns at the White House—and we have them in every 6 months or so, these amazing young people, hugely talented—they're idealistic, they're optimistic. And I say to them, don't lose that optimism, don't lose that idealism. If you had to choose a period in human history in which to be born, and you didn't know ahead of time who you were going to be and what position or what nationality, you just had to choose what's the timeframe, you would choose now.

The world has never been healthier, it has never been wealthier, it has never been more tolerant, there's never been more opportunity than there is today. That doesn't mean that there aren't extraordinary problems out there to be solved. That doesn't mean that there aren't huge challenges that we have to meet. But it is worth remembering that even in this country, the greatest country on Earth, 50 years ago I couldn't be standing here; that 25 years ago, your mayor couldn't be married. And because of this extraordinary impulse in all of us to imagine and dream something better and then work for it and not give up and be persistent and pick ourselves up and dust ourselves off after setbacks and being willing to endure skeptics and naysayers—because of that spirit—we've been able to make enormous changes.

This week was the 45th anniversary of man landing on the Moon. And I had Buzz Aldrin, Michael Collins, and the wife of Neil Armstrong into the White House yesterday. And I thought about how, when I was 6, 7, 8 years old, sitting on my grandfather's shoulder in Hawaii as the capsules were brought back from the *Apollo* launches, nobody went to the Moon because they were skeptics. Naysayers didn't send anybody to the Moon. That singular moment in human history, that happened because of that spirit. And that spirit has to translate in our politics as well.

That's why you're here. That's why we've got to get to work. That's why I ran for President. And if we allow that spirit to live, nothing can stop us.

Thank you, everybody. Appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:04 p.m. at the residence of Bruce and Ann Blume. In his remarks, he referred to Libby Blume, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Blume; Gov. Jay R. Inslee of Washington and his wife Trudi; Sa-

brina K.A. Constantine, daughter of King County Executive Dow Constantine; retired Washington State Trooper Robert Koczewski, who died during a wildfire on July 14, and his wife Pat; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; *Apollo 11* crewmembers Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., and Michael Collins; and Carol Armstrong, wife of the late *Apollo 11* crewmember Neil A. Armstrong. He also referred to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which was approved July 22 and assigned Public Law No. 113–128. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Meeting With *Apollo 11* Crewmembers on the 45th Anniversary of the First Moon Landing
July 22, 2014

Forty-five years ago, while the world watched as one, the United States of America set foot on the Moon. It was a seminal moment not just in our country's history, but the history of all humankind.

The three brave astronauts of *Apollo 11*—Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins—took the first small steps of our giant leap into the future. And for all the years since, they and their families have served as testaments to American ingenuity and human achievement. Today I was honored to welcome Buzz, Michael, and Neil's wife Carol to the White House to mark this historic anniversary and to thank them for serving as advocates, role models, and educators who've inspired generations of Americans—myself included—to dream bigger and reach higher.

Today, under Administrator Bolden's leadership, the men and women of NASA are building on that proud legacy by preparing for the next giant leap in human exploration, including the first visits of men and women to deep space, to an asteroid, and someday to the surface of Mars, all while partnering with America's pioneering commercial space industry in new and innovative ways.

The United States of America is stronger today thanks to the vision of President Kennedy, who set us on a course for the Moon, the courage of Neil, Buzz, and Michael, who made the journey, and the spirit of service of all who've worked not only on the *Apollo* program, but who've dared to push the very boundaries of space and scientific discovery for all humankind.

NOTE: The statement referred to Carol Armstrong, wife of the late *Apollo 11* crewmember Neil A. Armstrong.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Luncheon in Los Altos Hills, California
July 23, 2014

Hello, everybody. Oh, no need to stand again. Sit down. Thank you so much.

Well, there are two reasons I'm here. Number one, it's really nice. [*Laughter*] The weather is good. It's pretty—it's gorgeous. The second reason is George and Judy's granddaughter and me, we've just got a connection. [*Laughter*] She is adorable. There she is. [*Laughter*] Look how happy she is to be with the President. [*Laughter*] I may take her with me. [*Laughter*] She is gorgeous.

A couple of people I want to thank. Obviously, George and Judy, we want to thank them not only for their incredible hospitality, but for the amazing support that they provided to so many important causes through the years. It's wonderful to see somebody who has really lived out the American Dream, remembers it, and wants to give back. And so please give them a big round of applause.

One of my favorite people, even if I did not entirely depend on her for all kinds of stuff,

she is somebody who combines grace and intelligence and toughness with deep and abiding compassion. And she has just been a remarkable partner to me throughout my Presidency, and George is exactly right, I need her back as Speaker of the House: Nancy Pelosi.

Nancy could not do what she does unless she has good partners in Congress. And one of the best partners she could ever hope for is your own Congresswoman, who not only represents this district, but is a leader on issues across the board and has been a great friend, Anna Eshoo. Thank you for all the work, Anna, on this.

And then we've got a couple of candidates who are here. Michael Eggman is here. Where is Michael? There he is. And Amanda Renteria—there she is—Renteria. Two outstanding candidates and part of what it is that we're just trying to build here and across the country.

I've got so many friends, so many people who have supported me for so long. As I look back, I realize how many of you have pictures of me with no gray hair. [*Laughter*] You're chronicling the slow deterioration of Barack Obama. But as a consequence, one of my main functions here today is just to say thank you, because you guys have been incredibly supportive in everything that we've done at every stage. Many of you supported me back when I was running for the U.S. Senate, when nobody could pronounce my name, and then helped to mobilize an amazing movement back in 2008, and it continued until today.

So, because I know so many of you so well, I'm not going to speak long at the top. What I want to do is spend most of the time in a conversation with you. Let me just make a couple of observations.

Number one, as George alluded to, when we came into office we were going through the worst economy since the Great Depression. In fact, the contraction was actually larger by some measures than the Great Depression. In part because of the incredible resilience of the American people, but in part because we actually put some smart policies in place, the record over the last 5 years is some pretty remarkable progress.

There's almost no economic measure by which we are not better off today than we were when I came into office—that 52 straight months of job growth; 10 million jobs created; this past year, the biggest drop in unemployment in 30 years. Unemployment now is lower than it was before Lehman's. We've seen the deficit cut by more than half. Millions of people have health care that didn't have it before, and health care inflation is the lowest that it's been in 50 years. The stock market obviously has more than recovered, and that's important for Wall Street, but more importantly, it's important for Main Street. People whose 401(k)s had collapsed have built up some sense of retirement security once again.

When I came into office, investors around the world thought that China was the top place to do business. Today, they think that America is the top place to do business, in part because of the fact that we've recovered faster than most industrialized nations and come further; in part because some of the energy policies that we've put in place means that for the first time in over 20 years, we're now producing more oil than we import. We doubled clean energy, tripled the amount of wind energy that we produce, increased by 10 times the amount of solar energy that we're producing, and we have reduced carbon pollution by the largest factor of any industrialized nation. High school dropout rates have gone down; college attendance is up.

And when you put all this together—manufacturing stronger than any time since the 1990s, an auto industry that was on the verge of collapse now fully recovered and stronger than ever and producing cars that not only people want to buy, but also are slated to double fuel efficiency by the next decade—it's no wonder then that a lot of people outside of the United States would say we've got the best cards out there. There's no country that wouldn't gladly trade places with us in terms of our strategic position. And part of that is also because we continue to have a culture of innovation and dynamism that Silicon Valley represents better than anyplace else on Earth.

And yet there's a lot of anxiety out there. And there's anxiety for a couple of reasons. Number one, for all the progress that we've made, there's a 20-, 30-year trend that has not changed, and that is that more and more, productivity, corporate profits, the benefits of innovation accrue to folks at the very top. And the middle class and folks striving to get into the middle class, they're stuck. They feel like they're treading water. They feel as if, no matter how hard they work, they can't get ahead, and more worrisome, they're concerned that their kids are not going to be able to get ahead.

And the second concern people have is it feels as if Washington doesn't work and doesn't listen to people and isn't paying attention to them. And those two things are related.

There are specific policies we could put in place that we know would make life easier for people out there who are working hard on behalf of their families and trying to do the right thing. We know that if we had a sensible policy of rebuilding our infrastructure—our roads, our bridges, our ports, a smart grid—that all of that would spur on growth, put people to work right away; we'd have lower unemployment, and we'd be setting the stage for economic growth for decades to come.

We know that if we invest in early childhood education, every dollar we put in, we get $7 back in terms of kids doing better in school, less likely to drop out, less likely to end up in prison, less likely to be unemployed. We know that.

We know that 28 million people would be helped if we raise the minimum wage so that it's comparable to what it was 20 years ago. We know that if we helped working families deal with issues like childcare that that would be an enormous burden lifted off them. We know that if women who are in the workforce aren't getting paid less than men for doing the same job, that's not just good for the women, it's good for entire families because, as Anna and Nancy often remind us, when women succeed, America succeeds. And by the way, as the child of a single mom, you don't have to convince me on that.

So we know what works. This is not a technical problem. We have some big technical issues: What are the—what's the next big energy breakthrough that's going to allow us to fully contain the dangers of climate change? How do we make sure that all the innovation and productivity that is taking place and generated in places like this translate into more jobs and not more layoffs?

There's some big, technical, economic issues, scientific issues that we have to address. But if we just took some commonsense steps, this country would grow faster, more people would be working, more families would be better off.

And the reason we don't do it is because politics doesn't work in Washington. And the reason politics does not work in Washington—I want to be clear—is not because both parties are in the tank. It's not because everybody who goes to Congress is solely self-interested. The reason it doesn't work right now is because we have one party that has no agenda other than making Government not work; whose primary function, primary purpose right now, if you distill their ideology, comes down to saying no to any efforts to help ordinary families get ahead. Some of it is ideologically driven. Some of it is driven by pure political calculation, because what they know is if Government is not working, people get cynical; and if people get cynical, they do not vote; and if people do not vote, that advantages them.

And so I hope the reason that you're here today is because you want to get something done. And in order to get something done, we have to reverse that cycle. We have to break this cycle of gridlock and cynicism. And there's a real simply way to do it: It's making sure that people who are serious about governing are in power.

And I say that not as a strict partisan. Yes, I am a Democrat, and I'm a proud Democrat. But my favorite President is the first Republican President, from my home State of Illinois, a guy name Abraham Lincoln. And there has been throughout our history contributions by both parties to advance the common good. I'd love nothing more than a loyal and rational

opposition. But that's not what we have right now, and as a consequence, we're going to need change. And to bring about change, we're going to need you.

So I'll just close by saying that Democrats have a lot of good qualities. We do have a congenital defect, and that is we do not vote during midterm elections. But I need everybody here to have as great a sense of urgency about these midterms as you had about my election in 2008 or my election in 2012. Because as much as I can do as President of the United States, I cannot do it alone. I need partners. I need help. And that help comes in the form of having Nancy Pelosi as Speaker and having Anna as somebody who's in the majority. So I hope all of you get to work.

With that, let me take some questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. at the residence of George M. and Judy Marcus. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Los Angeles, California

July 23, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. Hello, Los Angeles. Oh, this is a nice looking crowd. You all got dressed up. [*Laughter*] Don't you look cute? Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Relax.

It is good to be in Los Angeles. Let me first of all say thank you to Shonda for opening up this unbelievable space and arranging for perfect weather. Give Shonda a big round of applause. I've gotten to know Shonda over the last couple years, and for somebody who is just so successful and is doing so much, you can't ask for somebody who is more humble and more thoughtful and has shown incredible kindness to me and my family. And I am very, very proud to know her and to call her a friend. So I just want to say thank you so much for everything you do, not just for me, but for a lot of people who she's given unbelievable opportunities to. So give Shonda a big round of applause. We love Shonda.

Kerry Washington I want to thank. Kerry—there are few people who worked harder on my campaign, even back when people didn't pronounce my name right—[*laughter*]—than Kerry Washington. And she has been—she's not a latecomer. She didn't jump on the bandwagon. She pushed when the wagon was stuck in the mud; she was out there. [*Laughter*] And she's just been a great friend. Plus she showed me her baby pictures, and that is one cute baby. And I want to thank her and the entire host committee for helping to set this up.

My girl, Janelle Monáe. Janelle has performed at the White House, like, 15 times. And we—there's going to be an official Janelle Monae room in the White House. [*Laughter*] We love her. Michelle and I love Janelle. We love her energy. We love her talent. But we most of all, love her character. And anybody who gets a chance to talk to her, this is just a remarkable, strong, smart young lady.

And I have to say nice things about her because she may be the only person in possession of a video in which I try to keep up with her and Usher on the dance floor. [*Laughter*] Now, this is top secret. She has promised that this will never be released. But she can blackmail me at any time. [*Laughter*]

Musician Janelle Monáe. I love you!

The President. I love you back. You do have that video, though, don't you?

Ms. Monáe. I do. [*Laughter*]

The President. Now, tell the truth, though, Janelle, I wasn't bad, though, was I? [*Laughter*] I'm just saying. Go ahead, testify just a little bit.

Ms. Monáe. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Let me say, I did not drop in splits. [*Laughter*] But I did bust a move. That I did do. [*Laughter*]

Finally, let me say thank you to somebody who's been tireless on behalf of the Democratic Party. She is a great Congresswoman, but she is also an outstanding chair of the DNC, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, all the way from Florida. Where's Debbie? She's around here somewhere.

So, a little over 5 years ago, I took office at one of the most difficult times in our history. And when I reflect back on those 5 years—and every gray hair that I have to prove that 5 years have passed—I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that by almost every economic measure, we're better off now than we were then. Ronald Reagan used to ask when he was campaigning, "Are you better off than you were 4 years ago?" Well, you know what, I don't mind answering that question, mostly because of the skill and resilience and strength of the American people, but also because we put in place some wise policies.

We've seen the unemployment rate drop faster this past year than any time in the last 30, and we now have an unemployment rate that's lower than it was before the financial crisis. We have seen the deficits drop by more than half. We've seen millions of people get health care that didn't have it before. We've seen health care inflation at the slowest rate in 50 years. High school dropouts are down. College graduations are up. An auto industry that was on the brink of bankruptcy is now thriving. Manufacturing, the strongest that it's been since the 1990s.

When I came into office, you asked investors around the world what's the best place to invest in, and they would say China. Today, they say the United States of America. So, economically, we've made enormous progress. Socially, we've made progress.

When I came into office, we still saw that there were people who were serving this country, putting their lives on the line, who couldn't tell the truth about who they were and who they loved. And we ended "don't ask, don't tell," and we helped to argue against DOMA. And ultimately, we've now seen this amazing transformation in terms of how our LGBT brothers and sisters are treated all across the country.

We've ended one war; we're in the process of ending another. We've made sure that millions of those returning veterans are able to get the kind of college education or skills that they need in order to find a job.

Across the board, you could argue that we're in a better place. But—and here's the "but." You knew there was a "but"; otherwise, there wouldn't be much of a call to arms here. The truth is, is that people across the country still feel anxious. And the question is, why? Well, one of the reasons they feel anxious is because even though the stock market has hit record highs, and even though corporate profits have hit record highs, for the vast majority of folks in the middle class or people striving to get into the middle class, their wages, their incomes have flatlined. No matter how hard they work, they feel as if they're treading water. And that's not a 1-year trend, that's not a 5-year trend—although the great recession made it much worse—that's a 20-, 30-year trend.

People don't feel as if the basic American Dream—if you work hard and you act responsibly you can get ahead—that that is sufficiently realized for all Americans. So we've got some folks who are doing very well, but there are a whole lot of folks who still aren't.

People are still feeling anxious because some of the paths of opportunity for people who were born in a tough situation, those paths seem to be narrower and narrower. It's harder to get money to go to college. If you do get to college, you're loaded up with a whole lot of debt. The jobs that might be available if you go may not allow you to service those debts. And so young people start feeling anxious; they're not sure whether their hard work will pay off in the future.

Obviously, people are concerned about some of the turmoil that's taking place around the world. And they look at the Middle East, and they see a transition from an old order to a new order, and they're not sure how that's going to happen, and the terrible violence that occurs as a result.

But the conflict that probably makes people most discouraged is the conflict they see in Washington, where Members of Congress can't seem to do anything, where all we hear about is gridlock and all we hear about is posturing and all we hear about are phony scandals. And no offense, "Scandal" is a great show—[*laughter*]—but it's not something that we necessarily want to be living out day in, day out. And the truth is, is that what we see on the nightly news or on cable news is just this constant clamor of hot air and folks posturing and opinionating, but not actually doing any work that focuses on the people who sent them there.

And those two things are connected: the idea that the economy is not working for everybody and that the Government isn't working for anybody. Because the truth of the matter is, when you look at our history, our economy has always grown best when it grows from the middle out, from the bottom up, not from the top down. When everybody gets a chance, everybody does well.

But typically, throughout our history, the way that has happened is that the entrepreneurship and drive and energy and focus of the American people is then combined with some collective efforts through our Government to give people a shot. The GI bill for folks coming back from World War II. Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security for seniors; if they've worked a lifetime, they shouldn't be living in poverty. The ability for me or Michelle to go to college because somebody was out there providing grants and loans that were affordable. Decent public schools, decent public parks, a sense of community, and a willingness to invest in the next generation—even if our kids were going to be okay, we decided, you know what, we want every child to have that same shot.

That's how we grew this economy. That's how we became an economic superpower. And so, when Government doesn't work at all, it means that it's much harder for folks to get a handle, an ability to climb up those ladders into the middle class.

Now, I know I may be preaching to the choir here, but let me just be clear: The reason Government is not working is not because both parties are just at fault and a plague on both their houses, nobody has integrity, politicians are all the same, they're all—no. Democrats are not perfect. No—[*laughter*]—we've got some strong partisan Democrats here. [*Laughter*] Let me just say, Democrats are not perfect. There are some times where we've done some stupid stuff. There have been times where we've been on the wrong sides of issues. There are Democrats who are more interested in getting elected than getting things done. There are Democrats who sometimes cater to special interests.

But the truth of the matter is that the reason right now we don't have a Government that's working for the American people is because the Republican Party has been taken over by people who just don't believe in government; people who think that the existing arrangements where just a few folks who are doing well, and companies that pollute should be able to pollute, and companies that want to cheat you on your credit card should be able to do that, and that anything goes—that's their philosophy. And as a consequence, they have no interest in seeing anything work. The people they're fighting for and working for, stuff is working for them just fine.

And so they obstruct, and they obfuscate, and they bamboozle, and they sometimes don't tell exactly what's true—that was a euphemism. [*Laughter*] And the reason it works for them is because so often we look at what's happening and we say, you know, we don't really like the Republicans and what they're doing, but if nothing is working, it's not worth my time to get involved. And people grow cynical, and people grow discouraged. And over time they start thinking, you know what, all politicians are the same. And most folks don't have the time to sort out all the intricacies of Obamacare or Benghazi or this or that. They don't have time for that. All they know is, it's not working for them. And so people then pull out, and they drop out, and they don't work. And that further entrenches those who are protecting an unjust status quo.

And so I'm here today—and I hope you are here today—to help to break that cycle of cynicism. We can't afford to be cynical. We've got so much to do. As much as we've done over the last 5 years, we've got so much more to do. And the truth of the matter is, is that if we are serious about helping the middle class and people trying to get into the middle class, we know what to do. We know that if we raise the minimum wage, then there are 28 million who are helped. Janelle has spoken movingly about her family and her mom working, cleaning other folks' mess. I tell you what, there are a whole bunch of folks out there who if they have a higher minimum wage, it helps them. It makes a difference in their lives. We know it. And by the way, if they have more money in their pockets, that means they're spending more money and businesses are doing better, not worse.

We know that if we were helping more families with childcare and early childhood education, our kids would be better. Every dollar we put into early childhood education, we get $7 back and lower dropout rates and lower teen pregnancies and lower substance abuse. And by the way, then parents are helped because they don't have the worry of whether or not somebody is going to be looking after their children safely and properly when they have to go off to work. We know that. Other countries are able to provide that. Why aren't we? Wealthiest nation on Earth.

We know that women are still getting paid 77 cents on the dollar. We've proposed to make sure that we strengthen the laws that ensure equal pay for equal work. I've got two daughters. I don't want some boy getting paid more than my daughters for doing the same job. And that's not just good for women, that's good for America. When women succeed, America succeeds. We know that. Why aren't we moving forward on that?

We know we could be doing more to make college more affordable, helping young people lower their costs so that they start a family or start a business when they—when I graduated from college in the eighties, I didn't have any money. I was relying on loans and grants and working during the summer and working during the year. But I was able to pay off most of my debt in about a year, and I wasn't making a lot of money that first year.

Young people now, they're averaging $25,000, $26,000 in debt when they come out of school. And they start in a hole. I said average. There are some folks who have got more. We could be helping them. Why aren't we?

We could be rebuilding America right now. We've got $2 trillion in deferred maintenance. Shonda just moved into this house. She was telling me how she's going to have to do a few renovations. [*Laughter*] Well, you know what, America is still relying on roads and bridges and dams and water systems that were built in the thirties and forties and fifties and sixties, when we had a sense of common purpose. Why aren't we rebuilding all that stuff? We could be putting folks to work right now, retraining young men and women to be out there rebuilding our roads, our bridges, our ports, our electrical grid, our airports, all of which would make our economy more efficient and would help families right now.

So we know what to do. The problem is, is that there's no political will to get it done. And that's where you come in. That's where you come in. I know that sometimes people got so excited back in 2008, they though, all right, we elect Barack, and that's it. [*Laughter*] That's it. Despite the fact that some of you remember—some of you were there in 2008; you might have gone to an early rally in 2007, 2008. And what would I tell you? I told you at the time this is not about me, this is about getting our democracy to work, getting everybody involved and engaged. And when we win, that's not the end, that's the beginning. It gives us the opportunity to start doing stuff, and we have to continue to be involved. And that means that I've got to have a Congress that has some sense and is willing to work and is willing to compromise and is focused on the American people. And we don't have that right now. And since we don't have it right now, we're going to have to work a little harder to get a Congress that works on behalf of the American people.

Now, one of the problems with Democrats is, we're real good on Presidential elections. We get real excited. But during midterm elections, people don't even know there's an election, don't know who their Congressman is, don't know who their Senators are. And as a consequence, the other side tends to vote at higher rates. We're disproportionately young. We're disproportionately minority, disproportionately single women. And we don't vote at the same rates. And so the midterms come around, and lo and behold, we're surprised when John Boehner is the Speaker of the House. Say, well, how did that happen? [*Laughter*] What happened to Nancy Pelosi? What happened was, you all didn't work. That's what happened. [*Laughter*] And then, all kinds of—[*laughter*]—stuff happened. [*Laughter*] That's what it was—stuff. [*Laughter*]

So we've got to step it up in the midterms, not when it's easy, not when it's sexy, not when there's "Hope" posters and Janelle singing and it's all cute. We've got to be in the trenches when it's hard. And it's hard right now, but now is exactly when everybody has got to step up. You've got to step up. And if you do step up, then we're going to make progress. We're not going to solve every problem, but we'll make progress.

We'll be able to continue to develop our energy in this country in a way that also protects our environment and prevents climate change. We'll be able to put people to work rebuilding cars for the future that have twice the fuel efficiency—save you money, save our environment.

If you work hard, we will get a minimum wage increase that will help millions of people. If you are willing to engage, we'll get "equal pay for equal work" legislation passed. If you're willing to work hard, we'll rebuild some roads and bridges and put people back to work. If you are willing to work hard, then we can help to transform our criminal justice system so we don't just have a pipeline from schools to jails, but instead, we got pipelines from schools to college to jobs—if you're willing to work.

If you're willing to work, then the incredible progress we've already made on the Affordable Care Act will be expanded, and more States will make sure that more people have the health care that they need and they won't go bankrupt if they get sick. We'll be able to make college more affordable. We'll make progress.

So let me just—let me wrap by saying this: Sometimes, in life as well as in politics, we don't get 100 percent of what we want right away. And in life, at least, I think when I'm talking to Malia and Sasha, and they confront a setback or an obstacle, I don't tell them, well, you should just quit. That's not the lesson I teach them. I tell them, yes, this is what life is like, and as you approach adulthood, you will confront more obstacles and more difficulties. But if you apply yourself, if you are persistent, if you're focused, if you have a vision about where you want to go, you'll get there.

Well, politics is no different. Sometimes, we're so steeped in cynicism, we are so convinced that nothing can change and nothing can happen, we forget the kinds of changes that have already been made.

We've got interns coming to the White House every 6 months—incredibly talented, accomplished, idealistic young people. And they come and they're having so much fun getting to know each other, and they're working in our offices. And then at the end, I speak to them as a group, and I answer a bunch of their questions, and invariably one of them will ask, well, you know, Mr. President, what's a piece of advice for us about how we can accomplish our goals, or how we can show leadership, or what have you. I said, you know, most of it is just persistence. And persistence, however, requires a sense of hope. Persistence requires a sense of optimism. You can't be persistent if you're cynical. You can't be persistent if you don't believe that at some point this work will pay off.

And so I always tell the interns, I said, listen, if you had a choice of any moment in human history to be born, and you don't know who you're going to be, you don't know that—there's no guarantee you're going to be Shonda. [*Laughter*] There's no guarantee that you're going to be rich. There's no guarantee that you're going to be a certain gender or a

certain race or for that matter, even a certain nationality. You're just asking, when should you be born in the history of human race, you'd choose now.

Mankind has never been wealthier, healthier, more tolerant, better educated than it is now this moment. And why is that? The reason is, is because 50 years ago and 100 years ago and 200 years ago, some people looked out and said, you know what, I think we can do things better. We can organize society better. We can be more just. We can be more fair. We can give more people opportunity. And they fought for it, and it didn't always happen right away.

We fought a civil war in this country that ended in the early 1860s. It took 90 years before the Supreme Court was even willing to affirm what the 13th and 14th and 15th Amendment said, and declare "separate but equal" unconstitutional. Almost 100 years from the bloodiest war in our history on our soil, just to get the Supreme Court to even acknowledge what had been the object of the fight. And then it took 10 years from the time that *Brown* vs. *Board of Education* was passed until 1964 when the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act started to become law that could actually implement the rulings of the Court. And then it took another 10, 15, 20 years before genuine opportunity opened up for a lot of folks.

And at each juncture, somebody could have said, this is too hard, and it ain't getting—it ain't ever going to happen. And in fact, people did, just like they told me I couldn't be President. [*Laughter*]

So my point is, nothing worthwhile has ever been accomplished by the cynics and the naysayers. This week is the 45th anniversary of Neil Armstrong landing on the Moon. Now, I remember sitting on my grandfather's shoulders when I was 6, 7, 8 years old—probably 5 or 6, actually. And I grew up in Hawaii, and I'd watch the astronauts come back in the capsules because they'd be picking them up out of the Pacific Ocean. And we'd be waving flags, and you could see the capsule from a distance. And I had Buzz Aldrin and Mike Collins and the wife of Neil Armstrong into the Oval Office just to celebrate. And we started talking, and we all agreed it wasn't the cynics and the naysayers that sent a man to the Moon. There were a whole bunch of folks who said you couldn't do that. It was the folks who said, no, we can do that; yes, we can. Just like it was the folks who said, yes, we can overcome slavery; yes, we can overcome Jim Crow; yes, we can get a voting rights act passed. At every juncture, it's not the cynics, but it's those who are filled with hope that get things done. Cynicism is a choice. Hope is a better choice.

And so, yes, we've been through 5 years of tough times, and yes, sometimes, politics looks nasty, and yes, it can be discouraging, and yes, we're going to have setbacks. And every step forward we take, sometimes, we'll get two steps back, and we'll start feeling like it's not worth it.

But remember, every single one of us here, at some point somebody was fighting for you when it wasn't likely that they would succeed. And we've got the same obligation to Kerry's young daughter and your sons and daughters and Malia and Sasha. And if we have that same sense of urgency in this midterm election, I am absolutely confident we can get a Congress that can work.

And I've got 2 years left in this Presidency. I want to get a whole bunch of stuff done. I need your help. So let's go out there and work.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. God bless Debbie Allen. Love you guys. Thank you. And Berry Gordy too. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:13 p.m. at the residence of Shonda Rhimes. In his remarks, he referred to actor Kerry Washington and her daughter Isabelle Amarachi Asomugha; musician Usher T. Raymond IV; *Apollo 11* crewmembers Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., and Michael Collins; and Carol Armstrong, wife of the late *Apollo 11* crewmember Neil A. Armstrong; actor Debbie Allen; and Berry Gordy, Jr., founder, Motown Records. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at Los Angeles Trade-Technical College in Los Angeles, California
July 24, 2014

The President. Hello, L.A.! Good to see you! Hello, Los Angeles! Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody. Now, if you've got a seat, sit down. I know that there—a couple people have been getting overheated. The—a tip for you: If you've got some water, then drink. Standing in the sun is rough. Bend your knees a little bit. And I'm going to try to be fast.

Audience member. God Almighty, Jesus Christ created heaven and the universe. Jesus Christ created heaven and the universe.

The President. All right. That's okay.

Audience member. You are antichrist! You are antichrist! You are antichrist! You will be destroyed! You will be destroyed!

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. All right. Thank you. Now, I have to admit that I've actually met that guy before. [*Laughter*] It's true—it's a couple of years ago, and he had the same line. He needs to update his material.

All right, everybody, settle down for a second. First of all, I'd like everybody to say thank you to Katrice not only for the great introduction, but for the great work she's doing helping to train people to get the kinds of jobs that we want and opportunity for people that don't have it. So, Katrice, thank you so much. We're proud of you.

My understanding—we understand we also have—Congresswoman Karen Bass is here. Where's Karen? We love Karen. There's Karen Bass. We've got—America's Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, is here. Give Tom a big round of applause.

And we want to thank L.A. Trade-Technical College for your hospitality. This is a school that does good work helping the unemployed retrain for new careers. And that's one of the things I want to talk about today.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

I always love being in California. I spent a couple good years here in college myself.

Audience member. Occi Tigers!

The President. Occi—that's right, Occi Tigers. Earlier today I sat down at Canter's with Katrice and a few Californians who wrote to me. I get letters from folks all across the country, and I read them every night. And folks tell me their stories—about their worries and their hopes and hardships and successes. Some say I'm doing a good job. Some say I'm an idiot, which lets me know that I'm getting a representative sample. [*Laughter*]

But in addition to Katrice, a young woman named Kati Koster was there, and she told me about her life. She grew up in a working class neighborhood in Wisconsin. Her parents taught her to value education, that that was going to be the ticket to the middle class. First in her family to go to college; moved on to get her master's degree from Pepperdine, stayed out in California.

And she wrote to tell me that she's always played by the rules, valued education, worked hard, but she felt "trapped" because no matter how hard she worked, it seemed like she couldn't get ahead. And she said, "If earning an education doesn't open doors for someone like me to rise above my socioeconomic class . . . what does that say about our country?" "What does it say about our values," she asked. She said, "I try not to be cynical, but one shouldn't have to be rich or from a wealthy family in order to pay their bills, save some money, have fun, enjoy life." She said: "I didn't write this letter to complain. I wrote because I don't know what else to do, and as the President of my country, I hoped you would listen to my story."

So, L.A., I'm here because I am listening to Kati's story. I'm listening to Americans all across the country, everybody who works their tail off, is doing the right thing, who believes in the American Dream, just wants a chance to build a decent life for themselves and their family. You are why I ran for President in the first place. And I am always going to be listening to you.

Now, the crisis that hit near the end of that campaign back in 2008 cost millions of Americans their jobs and their homes and their sense of security. But today, our businesses have added nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. The unemployment rate is at its lowest point since September of 2008. And this past year, we saw one of the fastest drops in nearly 30 years in the unemployment rate. The decisions we made not only to rescue the economy, rescue the auto industry, but to rebuild it on a new foundation, those decisions are paying off.

We're more energy independent. The world's number-one oil and gas producer is not Russia, it's not Saudi Arabia, it's the United States of America. We've reduced our carbon pollution over the past 8 years more than any country on Earth. You saw an L.A. Times headline the other day said, "2014 Off to the Hottest Start on Record for California." That's why we have to worry about climate change.

We've tripled the electricity we're getting from wind power, generating enough last year to power every home in California. We now generate 10 times the solar electricity, creating tens of thousands of jobs across the country. California is so far ahead of the rest of the country in solar that earlier this year, solar power met 18 percent of your total power demand one day. That's the kind of progress, kind of leadership, we need.

But it's not just the energy sector. In education, our high school graduation rate is at a record high. The Latino dropout rate has been cut in half since 2008. More young people are earning their college degrees than ever before. Meanwhile, 401(k)s have restored their value. Fewer homes are underwater. Millions more families have the peace of mind of affordable health care when you need it because we did pass the Affordable Care Act.

None of this was an accident. We made some good decisions, but we also saw the resilience and the resolve of the American people. And because of that, we've recovered faster, we've gone farther than almost any country on Earth since the economic crisis. For the first time in more than a decade, business leaders around the world have declared that the number-one place to invest is not China, it's the United States of America. And our lead is growing.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. So—U.S.A.!

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. So there are reasons—we've got every reason to be optimistic about America. We hold all the best cards. We've got the best hand. But the decisions we make now are going to determine whether or not working Americans like Kati continue to feel trapped or whether they get ahead; whether the economic gains that we make just go to a few at the top or they help to grow an economy and grow incomes and grow middle class opportunities for everybody.

And that's what's at stake right now: making sure our economy works for every working American. That's why I ran for President. That's what I'm focused on every day. This is the challenge of our time. We can't be distracted. And if you're in public office and you don't have an answer for somebody like Kati, if you're not thinking about her and folks who are working hard, but still struggling every day, why are you in public service?

So today I'm here to focus on one thing that we should be doing, which is training more Americans to fill the jobs we're creating. Right now there are more job openings in America than any time since 2007. That doesn't always make headlines. It's not sexy, and so the news doesn't report it, but it's a big deal. And the job training programs can help folks who fell on hard times in the recession, help them find a solid path back to the middle class.

And I'm always impressed by people who have the courage to go back to school, especially later in life. Last month, in Minnesota, I met a woman named Rebekah, a wonderful young woman. A few years ago, she was waiting tables. She enrolled in a community college, retrained for a new career; today, she loves her job as an accountant. Joe Biden's wife Jill Biden teaches at a community college. A lot of her students are in their thirties. One of the women I met with this morning, Joan Waddell,

wrote me to say she's ready to get back in the game at age 60, after caring for a sick husband, but older workers like her need a little support. And she wrote, "We are a great investment, and we want to be part of the workforce." And if you'd met Joan you'd want to hire her because she is sharp.

So Americans are the best workers in the world, if we're given a chance. If we work together, we can help more of our fellow citizens learn the skills that growing fields require: in high-tech manufacturing, in clean energy, in information technology, and in health care.

Now, the good news is, earlier this week, I signed a bipartisan bill into law that would help communities update and invest in job training programs like these. And I've got to say I had so much fun actually signing a bipartisan bill from Congress, I said, why don't you all do it more often? [*Laughter*] Why don't you focus on getting some stuff done for the American people? It feels good.

So my administration has taken some steps on our own. We've rallied employers to give the long-term unemployed a fair shot at a job. We're offering grants to community colleges that work with companies to expand apprenticeships. We're helping cities identify fields with job openings and custom-tailored programs to help workers earn the skills employers are looking for right now, whether it's melding whettles or coding computers. If your job has been stamped "obsolete" and shipped overseas, or displaced by new technology, your country should help train you to land an even better job in the future. And that's something we can do if we work together.

So this is just some of what we should be doing to help strengthen the middle class and help Americans who are working to join the middle class. And what I keep hearing from folks across the country is that if Congress had the same priorities most Americans did, if they felt the same urgency that you feel in your own lives, we'd be helping a lot more families right now.

I mean, think about what Congress hasn't done, despite the fact that I've been pushing them to do it. Congress won't act to make sure a woman gets fair pay. Why not? I went ahead and made sure more women have the protections they need to fight for fair pay in the workplace, because I believe equal pay should mean equal work. And when women succeed, America succeeds. Why isn't Congress doing something?

Audience member. It's not Congress, it's the Republicans!

The President. Well, I get you, I understand that.

Congress won't act to help more young people like Kati manage their student loan debt. I acted to give nearly 5 million Americans the chance to cap their payments at 10 percent of their income. I don't want future leaders saddled with debt they can't pay before they've even started off in life. Why is it—why don't we see House Republicans working with Democrats who've already said, we're behind making student loans more affordable?

Today marks exactly 5 years since the last time the minimum wage went up in this country. That's too long between raises for a lot of Americans. Now, I've done what I can by requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of $10.10 an hour. And since the first time I asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, 13 States and DC have gone ahead and raised theirs. And here is something interesting: States that have increased the minimum wages this year have seen higher job growth than those who didn't raise the minimum wage. America deserves a raise. It will be good for those workers and good for business.

So I'm not going to stop trying to work with Democrats and Republicans to make a difference in your lives. But I've got to call things as they are. What's really going on is that Republicans in Congress are directly blocking policies that would help millions of Americans. They are promoting policies that harm millions of Americans. Just this year, on the other hand, they voted to give another massive tax cut to the wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Just last week, they actually voted to gut the rules we put in place to make

sure big banks and credit card companies couldn't hurt consumers and cause another crisis. They're going in the wrong direction. Our economy does not grow from the top down, it grows from the middle class out. We do better when middle class families and folks who are working hard to get into the middle class have a chance.

So, just in case some Republicans are listening, let me give you an example of a place where Democrats and Republicans should be able to work together to make a difference. I want everybody to pay attention to this. Right now our businesses are creating jobs, more companies are choosing to bring jobs back to America. But there's another trend that is a threat to us. Even as corporate profits are higher than ever, there's a small but growing group of big corporations that are fleeing the country to get out of paying taxes.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Well, hold on a second. I want you to—I say fleeing the country, but they're not actually doing that. They're not actually going anywhere. They're keeping most of their business here. They're keeping, usually, their headquarters here in the U.S. They don't want to give up the best universities and the best military and all the advantages of operating in the United States. They just don't want to pay for it. So they're technically renouncing their U.S. citizenship. They're declaring they're based someplace else even though most of their operations are here. Some people are calling these companies "corporate deserters."

And it's only a few big corporations so far. The vast majority of American businesses play by the rules. But these companies are cherry-picking the rules. And it damages the country's finances. It adds to the deficit. It makes it harder to invest in things like job training that help keep America growing. It sticks you with the tab to make up for what they're stashing offshore through their evasive tax policies.

Now, here's—the problem is, this loophole they're using in our tax laws is actually legal. It's so simple and so lucrative, one corporate attorney said it's almost like "the Holy Grail" of tax avoidance schemes. My attitude is, I don't care if it's legal, it's wrong. And my attitude is, is that nobody begrudges our companies from turning a profit. We want them to be profitable. And in growing—a global economy, there's nothing wrong with companies expanding to foreign markets. But you don't get to pick the tax rate you pay. Folks, if you're a secretary or you're a construction worker, you don't say, you know what, I feel like paying a little less, so let me do that. You don't get a chance to do that. These companies shouldn't either. And the practice they're engaging in is the same kind of behavior that keeps middle class and working class families working harder and harder just to keep up.

So the good news is, there's a way to change this. We could end this through tax reform that lowers the corporate rate, closes wasteful loopholes, simplifies the Tax Code so people can't game it. And over the past 2 years, I've put forward plans that would have cut corporate taxes and made our tax system more competitive, but Congress hasn't done anything, as usual. Now, some Members of Congress, in both parties, have been working together on responsible corporate tax reform so we don't have to keep playing Whac-A-Mole, trying to chase folks around, we'd finally start dealing with these special interest tax loopholes. But that's going to take some time. And in the meantime, we need to stop companies from renouncing their citizenship just to get out of paying their fair share of taxes. We can't wait for that. You shouldn't get to call yourself an American company only when you want a handout from American taxpayers.

So that's why, in my budget earlier this year, I proposed closing this unpatriotic tax loophole for good. Democrats in Congress have advanced a proposal that would do the same thing. A couple of Republicans have said they want to address it too. Let's everybody get together, Democrats and Republicans, to deter companies from rushing to take advantage of this tax loophole. And let's make sure that we're rewarding companies that are investing and paying their fair share here in the United States.

And this is not a partisan issue. Just 10 years ago, a Republican-led Congress cracked down on corporations moving to offshore tax havens like the Cayman Islands. We should do it again. And I'm not interested in punishing these companies. But I am interested in economic patriotism. Instead of doubling down on top-down economics, I want an economic patriotism that says we rise or fall together, as one Nation, and as one people.

Economic patriotism says it's a good thing when we close wasteful tax loopholes and invest in education and invest in job training that helps the economy for everybody. Instead of tax breaks for millionaires, let's give tax breaks to families to help on childcare or college. Let's stop rewarding companies that ship jobs overseas, give tax breaks to companies that are bringing jobs back to the United States. Let's put America back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and airports. Let's make sure the next generation of good manufacturing is happening right here in Los Angeles and in Wisconsin and in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Economic patriotism says it's a good thing when our fellow citizens have access to preschool and college and, yes, health care that is affordable. It's a good thing when women earn the same as men for doing the same work. It's a good thing when nobody who's working full time has to raise a family in poverty. That's not un-American. It's how we built America: together. That's what economic patriotism is.

So let me just close by saying this. The hardest thing in politics is to change a stubborn status quo. It's even harder when Washington seems focused on everything but the concerns of you. There are plenty of folks out there who count on you being cynical and say you're not going to vote, you're not going to get involved. And that just gives more power to the special interests who already benefit from the status quo.

Cynicism is fashionable these days. But I've got to tell you, cynicism didn't put a man on the moon. Cynicism did not create the opportunity for all our citizens to vote. Cynicism has never won a war or cured a disease or started a business or fed young minds.

I believe in optimism. I believe in hope.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I believe in America making progress. And despite unyielding opposition, there are workers with jobs who didn't have them before because of what we've done. There are families who have health insurance because of what we've done. There are students who are going to college who weren't going before because of what we've done. There are troops who have finally come home after serving tour after tour overseas because of what we've done.

Don't let the cynics get you down. Cynicism is a choice, and hope is a better choice. And if we can work together, I promise you there's no holding America back.

Thank you, Los Angeles. I love you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Los Angeles, CA, resident David Serrano, who was removed from a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in West Hollywood, CA, on September 26, 2011, after interrupting the President's remarks; Katrice Mubiru, physical and sports therapy instructor, Los Angeles Community College District and Los Angeles Unified School District; recent University of California, Irvine graduate Aaron Anderson; nursing assistant trainee Joan Waddell; and St. Anthony, MN, resident Rebekah Erler. The President also referred to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which was approved July 22 and assigned Public Law No. 113–128.

Message to the Congress Transmitting an Amendment to the United States-United Kingdom Agreement for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defense Purposes
July 24, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, pursuant to section 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, the text of an amendment (the "Amendment") to the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defense Purposes of July 3, 1958, as amended (the "1958 Agreement"). I am also pleased to transmit my written approval, authorization, and determination concerning the Amendment. The joint unclassified letter submitted to me by the Secretaries of Defense and Energy providing a summary position on the unclassified portions of the Amendment is also enclosed. The joint classified letter and classified portions of the Amendment are being transmitted separately via appropriate channels.

The Amendment extends for 10 years (until December 31, 2024), provisions of the 1958 Agreement that permit the transfer between the United States and the United Kingdom of classified information concerning atomic weapons; nuclear technology and controlled nuclear information; material and equipment for the development of defense plans; training of personnel; evaluation of potential enemy capability; development of delivery systems; and the research, development, and design of military reactors. Additional revisions to portions of the Amendment and Annexes have been made to ensure consistency with current United States and United Kingdom policies and practice regarding nuclear threat reduction, naval nuclear propulsion, and personnel security.

In my judgment, the Amendment meets all statutory requirements. The United Kingdom intends to continue to maintain viable nuclear forces into the foreseeable future. Based on our previous close cooperation, and the fact that the United Kingdom continues to commit its nuclear forces to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, I have concluded it is in the United States national interest to continue to assist the United Kingdom in maintaining a credible nuclear deterrent.

I have approved the Amendment, authorized its execution, and urge that the Congress give it favorable consideration.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 24, 2014.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Otto Fernando Pérez Molina of Guatemala, President Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado of Honduras, and President Salvador Sánchez Cerén of El Salvador and an Exchange With Reporters
July 25, 2014

President Obama. Well, I want to thank very much President Molina, President Hernández, and President Sánchez Cerén for being here today. Our nations share extraordinary ties of culture, of family, of commerce that enrich all of us and make our country stronger. And we have a wide range of issues that we share and have discussed in the past in various bilateral and multilateral forms.

But today our focus was on what's been a significant challenge in the news and, more importantly, a significant challenge for families

that have been at risk as a consequence of the rise of unaccompanied children traveling from Central American countries to the U.S. border, leaving their homes in Central America and making a journey that poses great danger to themselves.

All of us recognize that we have a shared responsibility to address this problem. President Molina hosted Vice President Biden in an earlier meeting to look at specific steps that could be taken to alleviate this challenge. And today what I did was share with my counterparts here the efforts that the United States has in our continuing response, including unprecedented numbers of Border Patrol agents and resources at the border, more facilities to properly care for these children that have already arrived, and more resources for our immigration courts to process the claims of these children in a way that's orderly and timely that protects their due process, but also expedites the length of time that it takes to assure that they've gotten a fair hearing.

Now, I emphasized to all three Presidents that the American people and my administration have great compassion for these children and want to make sure that they are cared for the way all children should be cared for. And we've seen an outpouring of generosity from not only families at the borders themselves that are providing assistance—and nonprofit organizations and churches that are providing assistance—but actually, from across the country, people have expressed their concern and compassion for these children.

But I also emphasized to my friends here that we have to deter a continuing influx of children putting themselves at great risk and families who are putting their children at great risk. And so I emphasized that within a legal framework and a humanitarian framework and proper due process, children who do not have proper claims and families with children who do not have proper claims, at some point, will be subject to repatriation to their home countries.

I say that not because we lack compassion, but because in addition to being a nation of immigrants, we're also a nation of laws. And if you have a disorderly and dangerous process of migration, that not only puts the children themselves at risk, but it also calls to question the legal immigrant—immigration process of those who are properly applying and trying to enter into our country.

Each President here emphasized the degree to which they have already begun to make efforts to discourage this dangerous trafficking in children. And I want to thank all of them publicly—I already did so privately—for specific efforts that they're taking in each country to discourage parents from sending their children on this journey, for going after and arresting smugglers in a more aggressive fashion, and for working with us on the issue of repatriating the children and families in a safe and orderly way.

Initial reports show that our joint efforts appear to be paying off, and the number of unaccompanied children crossing the border this month appears to have dropped by half since June. Of course, it's still too high. And so today we agreed to continue to work together.

Finally, even as we meet this immediate situation, we all recognize that we have to do more to address the root causes of the problem, and that includes poverty and violence in Central America. I discussed this when I met with Central American leaders last year in Costa Rica. And we are committed to working together in partnership with each of these countries to find ways in which we can come up with more aggressive action plans to improve security and development and governance in these countries.

I expressed to them that we have a shared responsibility, for example, when it comes to dealing with drug trafficking, that we are dealing with the demand for drugs in the United States and doing more to stop the cross-border flows of arms, for example, from the north to the south. And I also continued to emphasize the fact that not just if, but when, we pass comprehensive immigration reform in this country, then we will have the capacity not only to strengthen resources at our borders, but we're also going to have a capacity to create more orderly ways for legal migration, in some cases temporary worker programs, that allow people

to advance economically, allow our economy to grow, allow families to be reunified, but also, in many cases, a lot of people to return to their families in their home countries.

With respect to the U.S. meeting some of its responsibilities, I briefed my fellow Presidents on the supplemental request that is working its way through Congress. And I just want to mention that it is my hope that Speaker Boehner and House Republicans will not leave town for the month of August for their vacations without doing something to help solve this problem.

We have a supplemental that provides resources for additional border security, for additional immigration judges, for additional resources to assist our Central American countries in providing facilities and opportunity and security needs to deal with the smugglers. And we need to get that done. And so there have been a lot of press conferences about this; we need action and less talk.

So let me once again thank President Molina, President Hernández, President Sánchez Cerén. Each of these leaders have shown great responsiveness and great sincerity in wanting to deal with this situation in as—a sensible and compassionate way. I appreciate their efforts. They all face significant challenges, and the one thing that we, I think, all recognize is, is that if we are working together in a coordinated fashion, if the United States is listening to the ideas of these Presidents in how they are creating greater opportunity and security in their country and also how we can deal with the challenges of the smugglers, I'm confident that we're going to be able to solve this problem.

So they've proven to be excellent partners, and this is a situation where the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts if we're working together effectively.

So thank you so much, gentlemen, for not only your thoughtful presentations, but also your concrete cooperation. It means a lot to me and to the American people.

Refugee Status for Central American Migrants

Q. Mr. President, what about the refugee proposal?

Q. Is the refugee program possible?

President Obama. Actually, I wasn't going to take questions, but let me just respond to this particular question because I felt like some of the stories were a little overcranked. And as I explained to my fellow Presidents, under U.S. law, we admit a certain number of refugees from all around the world based on some fairly narrow criteria. And typically, refugee status is not granted just based on economic need or because a family lives in a bad neighborhood or poverty. It's typically defined fairly narrowly; you have a state, for example, that was targeting political activists and they need to get out of the country for fear of prosecution or even death.

There may be some narrow circumstances in which there is a humanitarian or a refugee status that a family might be eligible for. If that were the case, it would be better for them to be able to apply in country rather than take a very dangerous journey all the way up to Texas to make those same claims. But I think it's important to recognize that that would not necessarily accommodate a large number of additional migrants.

What's more important is going to be for us to be able to find the kinds of solutions, both short term and long term, that prevents smugglers from making money on families that feel desperate; that ensure that we're creating greater security for families in Central America, and that we are helping to grow opportunity long term in Central America and creating the kind of legal immigration system that makes this underground migration system less necessary. And that's what I'm going to be committed to doing. All right?

Immigration Policy

Q. Will you accept less money from the supplemental, Mr. President?

President Obama. I said one question, Jeff [Jeff Mason, Reuters].

[*At this point, the interpreter translated President Obama's earlier response. President Obama then continued as follows.*]

President Obama. But we are going to continue to work in consultation with Central American countries to find additional creative and sensible ways in which legal claims for migration can be processed in those countries in a fair and just way.

All right. You guys got some bonus coverage there. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:42 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Joint Statement by President Obama, President Otto Fernando Pérez Molina of Guatemala, President Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado of Honduras, and President Salvador Sánchez Cerén of El Salvador
July 25, 2014

The Presidents of the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador issued the following statement at the conclusion of their meeting at the White House on July 25, 2014:

We met today to discuss our ongoing collaboration regarding the increased numbers of unaccompanied minors and adults with children migrating to the United States. We expressed our shared belief in the need for a humanitarian response to the situation, with a focus on the safety and well-being of children and families. We reiterated our commitment to prevent families and children from undertaking this dangerous journey and to work together to promote safe, legal, and orderly migration. We pledged to continue to pursue the criminal networks that are exploiting this uniquely vulnerable population and we agreed on the need to discourage the use of smuggling networks that place individuals at high risk of violent crime and sexual abuse along the journey. We reviewed and agreed to redouble our joint efforts to counter misinformation about U.S. immigration policy. We committed to work together on the ongoing efforts to humanely repatriate migrants, consistent with due process.

We expressed our commitment to work together in a spirit of shared responsibility to address the underlying causes of migration by reducing criminal activity and promoting greater social and economic opportunity. The Presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras welcomed President Obama's request for additional foreign assistance as part of the supplemental request to Congress to support the U.S. response to the increased migration. The Central American presidents indicated to President Obama that they are working on a comprehensive plan to address the underlying causes of the humanitarian situation on the border. We all agreed that an effective solution requires a comprehensive and joint effort on the part of the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, the United States, as well as other countries in Central America, and Mexico and Colombia. We directed our teams to begin coordinating such a plan, in collaboration with other international partners. Our objective is to create the conditions that will allow the citizens of Central America to live in safe communities with access to education, jobs, and opportunities for social and economic advancement.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of the Unlocking Consumer Choice and Wireless Competition Act
July 25, 2014

I applaud Members of Congress for passing the Unlocking Consumer Choice and Wireless Competition Act. Last year, in response to a "We the People" petition from

consumers across our country, my administration called for allowing Americans to use their phones or mobile devices on any network they choose. We laid out steps the FCC, industry, and Congress should take to ensure copyright law does not undermine wireless competition and worked with wireless carriers to reach a voluntary agreement that helps restore this basic consumer freedom. The bill Congress passed today is another step toward giving ordinary Americans more flexibility and choice so that they can find a cell phone carrier that meets their needs and their budget. I commend Chairmen Leahy and Goodlatte and Ranking Members Grassley and Conyers for their leadership on this important consumer issue and look forward to signing this bill into law.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 517. It also referred to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, chairman, and Sen. Charles E. Grassley, ranking member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; and Rep. Robert W. Goodlatte, chairman, and Rep. John J. Conyers, Jr., ranking member, House Committee on the Judiciary.

The President's Weekly Address
July 26, 2014

Hi, everybody. Our businesses have now added nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. The unemployment rate is at its lowest point since September 2008, the fastest 1-year drop in nearly 30 years; 401(k)s are growing, fewer homes are underwater, and for the first time in more than a decade, business leaders around the world have declared that the world's number-one place to invest is not China, it's the United States of America. And our lead is growing.

None of this is an accident. It's thanks to the resilience and resolve of the American people that our country has recovered faster and come farther than almost any other advanced nation on Earth.

But there's another trend that threatens to undermine the progress you've helped to make. Even as corporate profits are as high as ever, a small but growing group of big corporations are fleeing the country to get out of paying taxes. They're keeping most of their business inside the United States, but they're basically renouncing their citizenship and declaring that they're based someplace else, just to avoid paying their fair share.

Now, I want to be clear: This is only a few big corporations so far. The vast majority of American businesses pay their taxes right here in the United States. But when some companies cherry-pick their taxes, it damages the country's finances. It adds to the deficit. It makes it harder to invest in the things that will keep America strong, and it sticks you with the tab for what they stash offshore. Right now a loophole in our tax laws makes this totally legal, and I think that's totally wrong. You don't get to pick which rules you play by or which tax rate you pay, and neither should these companies.

The best way to level the playing field is through tax reform that lowers the corporate tax rate, closes wasteful loopholes, and simplifies the Tax Code for everybody. But stopping companies from renouncing their citizenship just to get out of paying their fair share of taxes is something that cannot wait. That's why, in my budget earlier this year, I proposed closing this unpatriotic tax loophole for good. Democrats in Congress have advanced proposals that would do the same thing. A couple Republicans have indicated they want to address this too, and I hope more join us.

Rather than double down on the top-down economics that let a fortunate few play by their own rules, let's embrace an economic patriotism that says we rise or fall together, as one Nation and as one people. Let's reward the hard work of ordinary Americans who play by the rules. Together, we can build up our middle class, hand down something better to our kids, and restore the American Dream for all who work for it and study for it and strive for it.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:15 p.m. on July 18 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on July 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 25, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 26.

Statement on the Observance of Eid al-Fitr
July 27, 2014

As Muslims throughout the United States and around the world celebrate Eid al-Fitr, Michelle and I extend our warmest wishes to them and their families. This last month has been a time of fasting, reflection, spiritual renewal, and service to the less fortunate. While Eid marks the completion of Ramadan, it also celebrates the common values that unite us in our humanity and reinforces the obligations that people of all faiths have to each other, especially those impacted by poverty, conflict, and disease.

In the United States, Eid also reminds us of the many achievements and contributions of Muslim Americans to building the very fabric of our Nation and strengthening the core of our democracy. That is why we stand with people of all faiths, here at home and around the world, to protect and advance their rights to prosper, and we welcome their commitment to giving back to their communities.

On behalf of the administration, we wish Muslims in the United States and around the world a blessed and joyous celebration. *Eid Mubarak.*

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Relocation of United States Armed Forces Personnel From Libya to United States Bases in Europe
July 27, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As I most recently reported on June 12, 2014, U.S. Armed Forces have been in Libya to support the security of U.S. personnel in that country. During the period July 25–26, due to ongoing violence resulting from clashes between Libyan militias in the immediate vicinity of the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli, embassy personnel and the U.S. forces supporting their security were temporarily relocated outside Libya. The U.S. forces departed Libya, via Tunisia, for U.S. bases in Europe. To support the safe departure of the embassy staff from Libya over land through Tunisia, U.S. military aircraft and additional military personnel entered Libya and Tunisia; those forces have also returned to bases in Europe.

This action has been directed consistent with my responsibility to protect U.S. citizens both at home and abroad, and in furtherance of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Presidential Summit Town Hall
July 28, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! Hello! Hello, everybody. Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. We're just getting started here. Well, hello, everybody. Welcome to Washington. The—I know most of you are visiting our country for the first time, so on behalf of the American people, welcome to the United States of America. We are thrilled to have you here. And to everybody who's watching online across Africa or at watch parties or following through social media, you are a part of this too, and you're glad—we're very glad that you're with us.

And can everybody please give Faith a big round of applause for the great introduction. I have to say, Faith didn't seem very intimidated by the setting. [*Laughter*] She seemed not lacking in confidence. [*Laughter*] And she's doing great work in South Africa to empower young peoples and young entrepreneurs, especially women.

Now, I'm not here to give a big speech. The whole idea of a town hall is for me to be able to hear from you. But first, I want to speak briefly about why I believe so strongly in all of you being here today.

Next week, I'll host a truly historic event, the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, where nearly 50 Presidents and Prime Ministers attend from just about all of your countries. It will be the largest gathering any American President has ever hosted with African heads of state and government. And the summit reflects a principle that has guided my approach to Africa ever since I became President: that the security and prosperity and justice that we seek in the world cannot be achieved without a strong and prosperous and self-reliant Africa.

And even as we deal with crises and challenges in other parts of the world that often dominate our headlines, even as we acknowledge the real hardships that so many Africans face every day, we have to make sure that we're seizing the extraordinary potential of today's Africa, which is the youngest and fastest growing of the continents.

So next week's summit will focus on how we can continue to build a new model of partnership between America and Africa, a partnership of equals that focuses on your capacity to expand opportunity and strengthen democracy and promote security and peace. But this can't be achieved by government alone. It demands the active engagement of citizens, especially young people.

And so that's why, 4 years ago, I launched the Young African Leaders Initiative to make sure that we're tapping into the incredible talent and creativity of young Africans like you. Since then, we've partnered with thousands of young people across the continent, empowering them with the skills and the training and technology they need to start new businesses, to spark change in their communities, to promote education and health care and good governance.

And last year in South Africa, at a town hall like this in Soweto—some of you were there—I announced the next step, which was the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. The objective was to give young Africans the opportunity to come to the United States and develop their skills as the next generation of leaders in civil society and business and government.

And the response was overwhelming. Across the continent, young men and women set out on a journey. In remote villages with no phones and Internet, they navigated the backroads, and they traveled by bus and train to reach larger towns and cities, just to get an online application for the program. One young woman from rural Zimbabwe took a 5-hour bus ride, then another 6-hour bus ride, then another 7-hour bus ride—a 2-day journey—just to get her interview.

And ultimately, some 50,000 extraordinary young Africans applied. And today they're heart—they're at the heart of what we're

calling our YALI Network, the online community across Africa that's sharing their ideas and forging new collaborations to realize the change that they seek. And I want everybody out there in the YALI Network to know that you're the foundation of our partnership with Africa's youth.

So today we're thrilled to welcome you, our Washington Fellows, to an exchange program unlike any other that America has ever had with Africa. And among your ranks is that young woman from Zimbabwe who endured all those bus rides. So we want to welcome Abbigal Muleya. Where's Abbigal? Where's Abbigal? Where is she? There's Abbigal. Hey! [*Laughter*] That's a lot of bus rides. [*Laughter*]

Now, I do have a first item of business. As I said, I launched this fellowship in Soweto, not far from the original home of Nelson Mandela. And the spirit of this program reflects Madiba's optimism, his idealism, his belief in what he called "the endless heroism of youth." And so today, with the blessing of the Mandela family, to whom we're so grateful, we are proud to announce that the new name of this program is the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. So you're the first class of Mandela Washington Fellows. [*Applause*] That's right.

So, now, I know all of you have been busy—all of you have been busy at some of America's top colleges and universities. You've been learning how to build a grassroots organization and how to run a business and how to manage an institution. As one of you said, "My brain has been bubbling with all sorts of ideas." And I know you've also been developing your own ideas for meeting the challenges that we'll address at next week's summit. And I wanted you to know, I've read some of the recommendations that were produced at each university and college, and I thought they were outstanding pieces of work. And that's what I want you to hear today: your ideas, your vision for Africa.

Here at this summit, you're going to engage with some of our Nation's leading voices, including someone who I know you can't wait to see, which is Michelle Obama, because the—[*applause*]. But many Members of Congress, who are strong supporters of this program, are also here. Where are the Members of Congress? I know that we've got a few. There you are. So some outstanding Members of Congress are here. You'll get a chance to meet some of them. And I know some of you are headed off to internships in some of our Nation's leading companies and organizations. One of you said, "I will take what I've learned here and put it into practice back home." And that's the whole idea.

And I want to say, by the way, I took some pictures with some of the university officials who had hosted all of you, and uniformly, they said they could not have been more impressed with all of you and what a great job you did in engaging and taking advantage of the program. So thank you.

I know you've also been experiencing America as well, the places that make us who we are, including my hometown of Chicago. You've experienced some of our traditions, like a block party. [*Laughter*] You've experienced some of our food; Faith said she ate a lot of Texas barbecue when she was in Austin.

Audience members. Woo!

The President. You really liked that barbecue, huh? [*Laughter*] So you've got the whole Longhorn thing going on and all that? [*Laughter*]

And Americans have been learning from you as well, because every interaction is a chance for Americans to see the Africa that so often is overlooked in the media: the Africa that is innovative and growing and dynamic. And a new generation, all of you, on Facebook and Twitter, and creating new ways to connect, like Yookos and MXit. I see some of you tweeting this town hall—[*laughter*]—although mostly, I see these guys shifting into the seat over and over again so everybody can get a picture. [*Laughter*] Don't think I didn't notice. [*Laughter*] You all just—you need to stay in your chairs. [*Laughter*] Everybody thinks they're slick.

So the point is, our young leaders—our Young African Leaders Initiative is a long-term investment in all of you and in Africa and the future that we can build together. And today I

want to announce some next steps that I think are important.

First, given the extraordinary demand for this fellows program, we're going to double it so that in 2 years, we'll welcome a thousand Mandela Washington fellows to the United States every year. The—so that's good news.

Second, we'll do even more to support young entrepreneurs with new grants to help you start a business or a nonprofit, and training thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs in smaller towns and rural areas. And given the success for our annual Global Entrepreneurship Summit, I can announce that next year's summit will be hosted for the first time in sub-Saharan Africa, which I think is going to be terrific.

Third, we're launching a whole new set of tools to empower young Africans through our YALI network: new online courses and mentoring, new ways to meet up and network across Africa and around the world, new training sessions and meetings with experts on how to launch startups. And it all begins today. And to get started, all of you—all you have to do is to go to yali.state.gov—yali.state.gov—and that will give you information about how you can access all these resources going forward.

And finally, we're creating new regional leadership centers across Africa. So we're joining with American universities, African institutions, and private sector partners like Microsoft and MasterCard Foundation—we want to thank the two of them; they're really helping to finance this. So give Microsoft and MasterCard Foundation a round of applause. Starting next year, young Africans can come to these centers to network and access the latest technology and get training in management and entrepreneurship. And we're starting in Senegal, Ghana, South Africa, and Kenya. And we aim to help tens of thousands of young Africans access the skills and resources they need to put their ideas into action.

So the point of all this is, we believe in you. I believe in you. I believe in every one of you who are doing just extraordinary things, like Adepeju Jaiyeoba. In Nigeria—there's Adepeju—in Nigeria, she saw a close friend die during childbirth. She now helps train birth attendants and delivers kits with sterile supplies, and helping to save the lives of countless mothers and their babies. So we want to thank Adepeju. We want her to save even more lives.

Or, to give you another example, Robert Nkwangu from Uganda. So there's Robert. So Robert is deaf, but even though he can't hear, he can see that the stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities must end. He's been their champion. He's standing up for the rights in schools and on the job. So thank you, Robert. We want to be your partner in standing up for the universal rights of all people.

I believe in Mame Bousso Ndiaye. [*Applause*] Right? So, in Senegal, she's taking a stand against the human trafficking that condemns too many women and girls to forced labor and sexual slavery. She runs an academy that gives them education and skills to find a job and start new lives. And so we are so proud of you. Thank you for the good work that you're doing. We want to help you help these young women and girls to the kind of future of dignity that we want for every woman all across the continent and all around the world.

And I believe in Hastings Mkandawire. Where's Hastings? In rural Malawi, he saw towns in darkness, without electricity. So now he gathers scrap metal, builds generators on his porch, takes them down to the stream for power, delivers electricity so farmers can irrigate their crops and children can study at night. Hastings, thank you. We want to help you power Africa.

So—and everybody here has a story, and we believe in all of you. We see what's possible. And we see the vision that all of you have, not because of what you've seen here in America, but because what you've already done back home, what you see in each other and what you see in yourself.

So Sobel Ngom, from Senegal. Where's—so Sobel has a wonderful quote. He has a wonderful quote. He said: "Here, I have met Africa, the [Africa] I have always believed in. She is beautiful. She is young. She is full of talent and motivation and ambition." And that's a good description. And being here with all of you and learning together and working together and

dreaming together has only strengthened his determination, he says, to realize "my aspirations for my country and my continent."

So to Sobel and to all of you and to everyone across Africa who joins our Young Leaders Initiative, I want to thank you for inspiring us with your talent and your motivation and your ambition. You've got great aspirations for your countries and your continent. And as you build that brighter future that you imagine, I want to make sure that the United States of America is going to be your friend and partner every step of the way.

So thank you very much, everybody. Let's get a few questions and comments in this town hall. All right?

All right. So, now, okay, I know this is kind of a rowdy crowd. [*Laughter*] First of all, I want everybody to sit down. [*Laughter*] Sit down. Now, I'm not going to be able to call on everybody, so just a couple of rules. Number one, don't start standing up and waving or shouting. Just raise your hand, and I will try to select from the audience, and I'll try to take as many questions as possible. So let's keep the questions—or comments relatively brief so that—and I will try to give a brief answer, although if you ask me what are we going to do about ending war—[*laughter*]—then that may require a longer answer. So we'll see how it goes. So that's rule number one.

Rule number two, we should have microphones in the audience, and so wait—when I call on you, wait until the microphone comes. The attendant will hold it in front of you. You can answer. Please introduce yourself, tell us what country you're from, and ask your question or make your remark. Number two, just to make sure it's fair, we're going to go boy, girl, boy, girl. [*Laughter*] In fact, you know what—in fact, we're going to go girl, boy, girl, boy. [*Laughter*] That's what we're going to do. Because one of the things we want to teach about Africa is how strong the women are and how we've got to empower women.

All right? So let's see who we're going to call on first. This young lady right here. Right here. Yes. So wait until the mike is there. Here, there's somebody right behind you who's got the microphone. Introduce yourself, and welcome.

Entrepreneurship

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Tsakani Nola Mashaba. I'm from South Africa. And my question is, previously Nelson Mandela has inspired the foundation of the Southern African Fund for Enterprises. It has run for two decades, and it has since been stopped. Is there any chance to develop another fund for enterprises in Africa?

The President. Well, it's a great question. One of the things that's been interesting in not only some of the platforms that you developed at your universities, but also during my trips to Africa is the degree to which young Africans are less interested in aid and more interested in how can they create opportunity through business and entrepreneurship and trade. Not to say that we do not need to deal with very serious challenges in terms of poverty. We need to make sure that we are continuing to work on behalf of the least of these. But what I think everybody recognizes is that if you want sustained development and sustained opportunity and sustained self-determination, then the key is to own what is produced and to be able to create jobs and opportunity organically and indigenously and then be able to meet the world on equal terms.

So part of the challenge in entrepreneurship is financing. And for so many individuals across the continent, it's just very difficult to get that initial startup money. And the truth is, is that in many communities around Africa, it's not that you need so much, but you need something, that little seed capital.

And so what we'd like to do is to work with programs that are already existing, to find out where are the gaps in terms of financing, and then to make sure that we are utilizing the resources that we have in the most intelligent way possible to target young entrepreneurs to create small and medium-sized businesses all across the continent that, hopefully, grow into large businesses. And if we're supplementing that kind of financing with the training and networking that may be available through

YALI, then we could see the blossoming of all kinds of entrepreneurial activities all across the continent that eventually grow into larger businesses.

And so we are very interested in this. This will be a primary focus of the summit that we have with the African leaders next week: How do we make sure that financing is available, and, by the way, how do we make sure that the financing does not just go to those who are already at the top? How do we make sure it filters down? You shouldn't have to be the son of somebody or the daughter of somebody. You should be able to get—if you've got a good idea, you should be able to test that idea and be judged on your own merits.

And that's where I think we can help bypass what oftentimes is—in, sadly, too many countries—a system in which you have to know somebody in order to be able to finance your ideas.

One thing I do want to say, though: Keep in mind, even in the United States, if you're starting a business, it's always hard getting financing. So there are a lot of U.S. entrepreneurs and small-businesspeople, when they're starting off, they're borrowing from their brothers and their sisters and begging and scratching and taking credit cards, and they're running up debt. And inherently, there is risk involved. And so I don't want to give anybody the illusion who is out there starting a business or wanting to launch a business that it's going to be easy. It will not be.

But there are ways where we can make a difference. And oftentimes, particularly in rural areas of Africa, you don't need a lot of capital to get started, right? So you may be able—if you buy one piece of equipment that can increase yields for a whole bunch of farmers in that community, and then the profits—additional profits—that they make you now—now allows you to buy two pieces of equipment and then four and then eight, you can grow fairly rapidly because the baseline of capital in that community may be relatively low. So you don't necessarily have huge barriers of entry. You just have to make sure that you have that initial capital.

But of course, in communities like that, even a small amount of capital can be hard to come by. And that's why making sure that this is a top priority of our efforts is something that we'll really emphasize. Okay?

All right, so let's see, this is a gentleman's turn. I'm going to call on this guy just because he's so tall. [*Laughter*] I always like—I like height. [*Laughter*] There you go. All right, go ahead.

Governance and Rule of Law in African Nations

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'm El Hadji Abou Gueyefrom Senegal. President Obama with President of—the first President of the United State of Africa. I would like to know, can you share the two important issues you will discuss with the first President of the United Nation of Africa?

The President. The—I'm sorry, I'm the first African American President of the United States.

Q. No, I ask if——

The President. They—but I wasn't sure of——

Q. Okay. Okay. Africa——

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Heads of state? What are the top two issues that I'm going to be discussing when we're in the summit tomorrow?

Q. The first—if Africa becomes the United State of Africa——

The President. Oh, I see.

Q. ——and you get the chance to meet the first President of the first United State of Africa.

The President. I see, okay. All right, so this is sort of like a—it's kind of an intellectual exercise. If I were to discuss—[*laughter*]—no, no, now I understand your question.

Q. It's clear?

The President. It's an interesting question. The idea is if somehow Africa unified into a United States of Africa, what would be something that I would say to him or her?

Q. First president. Her or him, yes. [*Laughter*]

The President. That—you know, I think the thing that I would emphasize first and foremost is the issue of governance. Now, sometimes, this is an issue that raises some sensitivities because I think people feel like, who's the

United States to tell us how to govern? We have different systems. We have different traditions. What may work for the United States may not work for us. Oh, and by the way, the United States, we don't see that Congress is always cooperating so well, and your system is not perfect.

I understand all that. So let's acknowledge all that. What I will say is this, that regardless of the resources a country possesses, regardless of how talented the people are, if you do not have a basic system of rule of law, of respect for civil rights and human rights, if you do not give people a credible, legitimate way to work through the political process to express their aspirations, if you don't respect basic freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, if there are not laws in place in which everybody is equal under the law so that there's not one set of rules for the well-connected and another set of rules for ordinary people, if you do not have an economic system that is transparent and accountable so that people trust that if they work hard, they will be rewarded for their work, and corruption is rooted out—if you don't have those basic mechanisms, it is very rare for a country to succeed.

I will go further than that: That country will not succeed over the long term. It may succeed over the short term because it may have natural resources that it can extract, and it can generate enough money to then distribute and create patronage networks. But over time, that country will decline.

And if you look at examples around the world, you'll have a country like Singapore, which has nothing; it's a small, tiny, city-state with not a lot of—it has no real natural resources, and yet it's taken off. And you have other countries, which I won't mention—[*laughter*]—that have incredible resources, but because there's not a basic system of rule of law that people have confidence in, it never takes off, and businesses never take root.

And so what I would emphasize is governance as a starting point. It's not alone sufficient. And you then also have to have an education system that's in place. You then also have to have, over time, infrastructure. And there are all kinds of other elements that are necessary. But if you don't have the basic premise that ordinary citizens can succeed based on their individual efforts, that they don't have to pay a bribe in order to start a business or even get a telephone, that they won't be shaken down when they're driving down the street because the police officers aren't getting paid enough and this is the accepted way to supplement their income—if you don't have those things in place, then over time, there's no trust in the society. People don't have confidence that things are working the way that they should. And so then, everybody starts trying to figure out, okay, what's my angle? How am I going to get my thing? And it creates a culture in which you can't really take off. Right?

And that's—look, you're never going to eliminate a hundred percent of corruption. You're never—here in the United States, occasionally we have to throw people in jail for taking money for contracts or having done favors for politicians. All that's true. But the difference here in the United States—and it's true in many of the more developed, industrialized countries—is, that's more the aberration rather than the norm.

I mean, the truth is, here in the United States, if you want to start a business, you go ahead, and you file a paper, you can incorporate. You might have to pay a fee of $50 or $100 or whatever it ends up being, and that's it. You've got your business. Now, the business might not be making any money at that point; you still got to do a whole bunch of stuff to succeed. But the point is, is that basically, rule of law is observed. That's the norm. That's what happens 95 percent of the time.

And that's, I think, where you have to start. And that's where young people, I think, have to have high expectations for their leadership. And don't be fooled by this notion that, well, we have a different way, an African way. Well, no. [*Laughter*] The African way is not that you suddenly have a—you've been in office, and then suddenly, you have a Swiss bank account of $2 billion. That's not the African way. That's not—[*applause*].

And part of rule of law, by the way, is also that leaders eventually give up power over time. It doesn't have to be the same way all the time. But if you have entrenched leadership forever, then what happens over time is, it just—you don't get new ideas and new blood. And it is inevitable, I think, sometimes that rule of law becomes less and less observed because people start being more concerned about keeping their positions than doing the right thing.

So, okay, great question, even though it took me a while to understand it. [*Laughter*]

So it's a young lady's turn. Let me make sure that I'm not restricting myself to—how about that young lady right there. Right there. You, yes, you. Yes. [*Laughter*] Hold on a second, the microphone is coming.

Gender Equality in African Nations

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. My name is Changu Siwawa, and I'm from Botswana. I just wanted to find out, how committed is the U.S. to assisting Africa in closing gender inequalities, which are contributing to gender-based violence, which it threatens the achievement of many Millennium Development Goals, such as access to universal education, eradicating HIV and AIDS?

The President. Well, listen, I am—you will not find anybody more committed than I am to this issue, and let me tell you why.

First of all, I was mentioning earlier, if you look comparatively at countries around the world, what societies succeed, which ones don't, one of the single best measures of whether a country succeeds or not is how it treats its women. And if you think about it, it makes sense, because, first of all, women are half your population. So, if you have a team—we just finished the World Cup, right—if you have a soccer team, what you all call a football team, and you go out, and the other side has a full team, and you send out half your team, how are you going to do? You will not do as well.

If you are not empowering half of your population, that means you have half as few possible scientists, half as few possible engineers. You are crippling your own development unnecessarily. So that's point number one.

Point number two is, if you educate and empower and respect a mother, then you are educating the children, right? So, with a man, you educate him, yes, it's okay. [*Laughter*] A woman, you educate her, and suddenly, you've got an entire village, an entire region, an entire country suddenly is becoming educated.

So this is an absolute priority for us. And what we—and we'll be discussing this with the heads of state and government that we see next week. And we've seen some progress on some fronts, but this is where sometimes traditions can get in the way.

And as many of you know, my father was from Kenya, and—[*applause*]—that's the Kenyan contingent. [*Laughter*] But I think what applies to Kenya is true and applies to many of the countries in Africa—and there—this is not unique to Africa, we see this in other parts of the world—some of the old ways of gender relations might have made sense in a particular setting. Right? So, in Kenya, for example, in the Luo tribe, polygamy existed. It was based on the idea that women had their own compounds, they had their own land, and so they were empowered in that area to be self-sufficient. And then, urbanization happened; suddenly, the men may be traveling to the city, and suddenly, there is another family in the city, and the women who were left back in the villages may not be empowered in the same way. And so what worked then might not work today, in fact, does not work today. And if you seek to—if you try to duplicate traditions that were based on an entirely different economy and an entirely different society and entirely different expectations, well, that's going to break down. It's not going to work.

So, as a continent, you have to update and create new traditions. And that's where young people come in. You don't have to accept what's the old ways of doing things. You can respect the past and respect traditions while recognizing they have to be adapted to a new age.

Now, I have to say, there are some traditions that just have to be gotten rid of, and there's no excuse for them. Female genital mutilation—

I'm sorry, I don't consider that a tradition worth hanging on to. I think that's a tradition that is barbaric and should be eliminated. Violence towards women—I don't care for that tradition. I'm not interested in it. It needs to be eliminated.

So part of the task is to find what traditions are worth hanging on to and what traditions you've got to get rid of. I mean, there was a tradition in medicine that if you were sick, they would bleed you. [*Laughter*] That's a bad tradition. We discovered, let's try other things, like medicine. [*Laughter*] So we don't have to cling on to things that just don't work. And subjugating women does not work, and the society will fail as a consequence.

So everything we do, every program that we have—any education program that we have, any health program that we have, any small business or economic development program that we have—we will write into it a gender equality component to it. This is not just going to be some side note. This will be part of everything that we do.

And the last point I'm going to make: In order for this to be successful, all the men here have to be just as committed to empowering women as the women are. That's important. So don't think that this is just a job for women, to worry about women's issues. The men have to worry about it. And if you're a strong man, you should not feel threatened by strong women. So—[*applause*].

All right. So we've got gentleman's turn. This gentleman in this bright tie right here. This is a—go ahead.

Public Health Progress in African Nations/Debt Relief for African Nations/Legacy of Colonialism/Economic Development in African Nations

Q. Thank you, Your Excellency. My name is Didas Mzirai, and I'm coming from Kenya.

The President. Hey, *habari?*

Q. Mzuri sana. Asante sana for your opportunity.

Africa is losing her people to starvation and diseases, which are otherwise curable. And this is largely because our governments are establishing very huge debts to the G–8 countries. As a global leader in the family of nations, when will the U.S. lead the other G–8 countries in forgiving Africa these debts so that our governments can be in a position to deliver and provide essential services, like social, health care, and the infrastructural development services to our people? Thank you.

The President. Well—thank you. Well, let me make a couple of points on this. First of all, I think it's important to recognize on issues of health the significant progress that has been made, because I think sometimes we are so properly focused on the challenges that we forget to remind ourselves how far we've come. And when you know how far you've come, it gives you confidence about how much further you can go.

So, over the last 20 years, HIV occurrence has been cut in half in Africa—half. Tuberculosis and malaria deaths have been reduced by 40 percent and 30 percent, respectively; 50-percent fewer women die giving birth; 50 million children's lives have been spared. And most importantly, now what we're doing is not just providing assistance through programs like PEPFAR, but we're also empowering governments themselves to begin to set up public health infrastructure and networks and training nurses and clinicians and specialists so that it becomes self-sufficient. So we're making progress.

Now, I think there is a legitimate discussion to be had around debt forgiveness. And in meetings with what now is the G–7, I just want to let you know—[*laughter*]—but that's a whole other topic that—[*laughter*]—we don't want to get too far afield—I think there's genuine openness to how can we help make sure that countries are not saddled with debts that may have been squandered by past leaders, but now hamstrung countries—are making countries unable to get out from under the yoke of those debts.

The only thing I will do, though, is I will challenge the notion that the primary reason that there's been a failure of service delivery is because of onerous debt imposed by the West. Let me say something that may be somewhat controversial. And I'm older than all of you;

that I know. [*Laughter*] By definition, if you're my age, you're not supposed to be in this program. [*Laughter*] You lied about your age. [*Laughter*] When I was a college student, issues of dependency and terms of trade and the legacy of colonialism, those were all topics of great, fervent discussion. And there is no doubt that, dating back to the colonial era, you can trace many of the problems that have plagued the continent, whether it's how lines were drawn without regard to natural boundaries and tribal and ethnic relationships; whether you look at all the resources that were extracted and the wealth that was extracted without any real return to the nature of trade as it developed in the sixties and the seventies, so that value was never actually produced in country, but was sent somewhere else. There are all kinds of legitimate arguments you can look at in terms of history that impeded African development.

But at some point, we have to stop looking somewhere else for solutions, and you have to start looking for solutions internally. And as powerful as history is, and you need to know that history, at some point, you have to look to the future and say, okay, we didn't get a good deal then, but let's make sure that we're not making excuses for not going forward.

And the truth is, is that there's not a single country in Africa—and by the way, this is true for the United States as well—that, with the resources it had, could not be doing better. So there are a lot of countries that are generating a lot of wealth. I'm not going to name any, but you can guess. This is a well-educated crowd. There are a lot of countries that are generating a lot of income, have a lot of natural resources, but aren't putting that money back into villages to educate children. There are a lot of countries where the leaders have a lot of resources, but the money is not going back to provide health clinics for young mothers.

So yes, I think it's important for Western countries and advanced countries to look at past practices. If loans have been made to countries to—that weren't put into productive enterprises by those leaders at that time, those leaders may be long gone, but countries are still unable to dig themselves out from under those debts—can we strategically in pin-point fashion find ways to assist and provide some relief? That's a legitimate discussion. But do not think that that is the main impediment, at this point, to why we have not seen greater progress in many countries, because there's enough resources there in country, even if debts being serviced, to do better than we're doing in many cases. All right?

Okay, so it's a young lady's turn. I haven't gotten anybody way back in the back there. So how about that young lady right there with the glasses. Yes, right there. There you go.

African Growth and Opportunity Act/Trade Promotion Efforts

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Zo.

The President. Zo? I like that name.

Q. Yes, from Madagascar.

The President. From?

Q. Madagascar.

The President. Madagascar.

Q. It's a great honor for me, Mr. President, to thank you on behalf of the Malagasy people to reintegrate Madagascar last month in the AGOA. And my question is, as it will end on 2015, we will have—we want to have your confirmation right here what will happen after 2015. We all know that the AGOA was a great way to decrease youth unemployment in our country, so what will happen after this, the end? Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. So AGOA, for those of you—I think everybody here is probably aware, this is one of the primary tools we have to promote trade between the United States and many African countries. It's set to expire. There's a negotiation process taking place as we speak. More progress will be made next week. I think that we've learned some lessons about what works and what doesn't through the first stage of AGOA. In some cases, what we've discovered is, is that many countries can't—even if they have no tariff barriers that they're experiencing, they still have problems in terms of getting their goods to market. And so part of what we're trying to do is to find ways in which

we can lower some of the other barriers to export for African countries, not just the tariffs issue, but how can we make sure that there is greater transportation networks, how can we make sure that trade financing is in place, what are the other mechanisms that may inhibit exports from African countries. So that's the first thing.

On a separate track, part of what we're also trying to figure out is, how can we promote inter-African trade? Because so often—and this does relate to a legacy of the past and colonialism—you have strong infrastructure to send flowers from Kenya to Paris, but it's very hard to send tea from Kenya down to Tanzania; much closer, but the infrastructure is not built. And so part of what we have to do is to try to find ways to integrate Africa.

Much of that is a question of infrastructure. Some of it has to do with coordinating regulatory systems between countries. We're embarking on some experiments starting in East Africa to see if we can get Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. ——see, you guys know all of them. [*Laughter*] We're starting to work with these countries to see, can we get some blocks of effective trading taking place?

Because, look, obviously there's going to be a certain market for certain goods—I mentioned flowers from Kenya. The market—that's primarily going to be in some of the wealthier countries. But there are going to be some goods that it's going to be much easier to sell. If I'm a Kenyan businessman, it's going to be easier for me to sell my goods to a Tanzanian or a Ugandan than it is for me to try to compete with Nike or Apple in the United States. Right?

And historically, when you look at how trade develops—if you look at Asia, for example, which obviously has grown extraordinarily fast—a huge volume of that trade is within the region first, and then over time, that becomes a launching pad from which to trade globally.

So this is an area where I think we can also provide some assistance and help. But my—just to answer directly your question, we are very strongly committed to making sure that AGOA is reauthorized. And obviously, we've got a bunch of Members of Congress here who care about this deeply as well. Okay.

How much time do we have, by the way? I just want to make sure—saying, 1 hour. [*Laughter*] Okay, I think we've got time for two more questions.

Audience members. Aww.

The President. Well, I'm sorry, but—[*laughter*]. The—so it's a gentleman's turn. Let me see. This gentleman in the white right here. That guy right there. Hold on one second, let's get a microphone on him.

Antitrust Law in African Nations

Q. Hi, I'm James Mulbah from Liberia. It is a pleasure meeting you, Mr. President. My question has to do with the issue of antitrust law. You will be meeting our leaders next week. Will you discuss the issue of antitrust law that will protect young entrepreneurs in Africa? If not, are you willing to include it on your agenda, please, to solve our problems back home? Thank you.

The President. Well, obviously, each country is different, and I'll be honest with you, I'm not familiar with the antitrust laws in every country. But what I would certainly commit to doing is to talk about antitrust in the broader context of what I said at the beginning after maybe the first question, and that is the issue of rule of law and how it interacts with the economy.

If you have monopolies or collusion between a few companies that create artificial barriers to new entrants, then economic theory will tell you that invariably, that is inefficient. It means consumers are going to pay more for worse products. It means those companies can concentrate more and more wealth without actually improving what they produce. And over time, the economy stagnates.

And here in the United States we had a history of huge, big, corporations controlling huge sectors of the economy. And over time, we put in laws to break up those monopolies and to create laws to guard against artificial monopolies that prevented competition.

So antitrust is one element of a broader set of laws and principles that every country should be adopting with the basic notion that, look, if you're successful—if you are a company like Apple that innovated and—or a company like Microsoft that came up with a new concept—you should be able to get big and you should be able to be successful, and those who founded it, like Bill Gates, should be wealthy. But what you also want to make sure of is, the next generation—the Googles or the Facebooks—that they can be successful too in that space. And that means that you have to make sure that those who got there first aren't closing the door behind them, which all too often, I think, happens in many countries, not just in African countries.

So you make an excellent point, and we'll make sure that that's incorporated into the broader discussion.

Okay, this young lady right here. Yes, because she looks so nice. [*Laughter*]

Young African Leaders Initiative/Youth Empowerment in African Nations

Q. Thank you very much. My name is Josephine Kulea. I'm from Kenya.

The President. I know. We've got a Masai sister right here. [*Laughter*] That's it. Go ahead.

Q. Thank you for this great initiative for the young people, and thank you for believing in the young people.

The upcoming summit with the Presidents, I know you're going to ask them on engagement of the young people back in their—in our countries. And my concern will be, how will you be able to engage them to commit to their promises? Because I know they're going to promise you that. Thank you.

The President. Well—[*applause*]. All right, don't get carried away here. [*Laughter*] Well, look, part of what we've done here by building this YALI network that we're going to be doubling over the next couple of years is, we're going directly to the young people and creating these networks and these opportunities. And I—what we're already seeing, I think, is many countries are excited by this. They're saying, you know what, this is something that can be an empowering tool for us, so let's take advantage of it.

There are going to be some that may feel somewhat threatened by it. There's no doubt about that. But the good thing is, we will be creating this network; there are a whole bunch of people who are following this online, who are following it on social media. We'll have these regional centers. You will help to make sure that some of these promises are observed, because the whole continent of young people is going to be paying attention, and we'll be able to see which countries are really embracing this opportunity to get new young people involved and which ones are ignoring this promise.

And so I will say to every one of these leaders, you need to take advantage of the most important resource you have, and that's the amazing youth in these countries. But you're going to have to also help to hold them accountable collectively across countries, and that's part of why this network can be so important.

So I know this is sad, but I have to go.

Audience members. Aww.

The President. I have other work to do. [*Laughter*] The good news is, you've got all these really amazing people who are still going to be meeting with you and talking with you. And most importantly, this is—what an amazing opportunity it is for all of you to get to know each other and to talk and to compare ideas and share concepts going forward.

The main message I want to leave you with is that, in the same way I'm inspired by you, you should be inspired by each other; that Africa has enormous challenges, the world has enormous challenges, but I tell the young people that intern in the White House—and I usually meet with them at the end of their internship after 6 months—I always tell them, despite all the bad news that you read about or you see on television, despite all the terrible things that happen in places around the world, if you had to choose a time in world history in which to be born, and you didn't know who you were or what your status or position would be, you'd choose today. Because for all the

difficulties, the world has made progress and Africa is making progress. And it's growing. And there are fewer conflicts, and there's less war. And there's more opportunity, and there's greater democracy, and there are greater—there's greater observance of human rights.

And progress sometimes can be slow, and it can be frustrating. And sometimes, you take two steps forward, and then you take one step back. But the great thing about being young is, you are not bound by the past, and you can shape the future. And if all of you work hard and work together and remain confident in your possibilities and aren't deterred when you suffer a setback, but you get back up and you dust yourself off and you go back at it, I have no doubt that you're going to leave behind for the next generation and the generation after that an Africa that is strong and vibrant and prosperous and is ascendant on the world stage.

So I can't wait to see what all of you do. Good luck.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mandela Washington Fellows Nomzamo Faith Mangope, Abbigal Muleya, Adepeju Opeyemi Jaiyeoba, Robert Nkwangu, Sokhna Mame Bousso Ndiaye, Hastings Mkandawire, and Sobel Aziz Alfred Marie Ngom; and William H. Gates III, chairman, Microsoft Corp.

Remarks on Presenting the National Medal of Arts and the National Humanities Medal

July 28, 2014

Hello, everybody. Hello! Hey! Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody. Please have a seat.

Well, welcome to the White House. It has been 200 years since Dolley Madison saved the portrait of George Washington that hangs in this room from an advancing British Army. So I guess you could say that the White House has always supported the arts. [*Laughter*] I'm glad to say that Michelle has never had to save any paintings that I know of, from Bo or otherwise. [*Laughter*] But we do believe in celebrating extraordinarily talented Americans and their achievements in the arts and in the humanities.

So I want to thank Jane Chu and Bro Adams, the Chairs of the National Endowment of the Arts and the National Endowment of the Humanities, for their outstanding work. And I want to thank Members of Congress, including a great champion of the arts, Nancy Pelosi, for joining us this afternoon.

The late, great Maya Angelou once said, "A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song." Each of the men and women that we honor today has a song, literally, in some cases. For others, it's a talent or a drive or a passion that they just had to share with the world.

To our honorees: Like most creative and brainy people, you did not cultivate your song for accolades or applause. If there were no medal for your work, I expect you'd still be out there designing buildings and making movies and digging through archives and asking tough questions in interviews.

But we do honor you today because your accomplishments have enriched our lives and reveal something about ourselves and about our country. We can never take for granted the flash of insight that comes from watching a great documentary or reading a great memoir or novel or seeing an extraordinary piece of architecture. We can't forget the wonder we feel when we stand before an incredible work of art or the world of memories we find unlocked with a simple movement or a single note.

So the moments you help create—moments of understanding or awe or joy or sorrow—they add texture to our lives. They are not incidental to the American experience; they are central to it, they are essential to it. So we not only congratulate you this afternoon, we thank

you for an extraordinary lifetime of achievement.

I'll just close by telling a tale of something that took place in this house, back in 1862. President Lincoln called together a meeting of his Cabinet to present them with the Emancipation Proclamation. But that was not the first item on his agenda. This is a little-known story. Instead, he began reading out loud from a story from the humorist Artemus Ward. It was a story called, "High-Handed Outrage at Utica." According to one often-repeated account, after he finished a chapter, Lincoln laughed and laughed. His Cabinet did not. [*Laughter*] So Lincoln read them another chapter. [*Laughter*] And they still sat there in stony silence. Finally, he put the book down and said: "Gentlemen, why don't you laugh? You need this medicine as much as I do." [*Laughter*]

To be clear, I probably will not be trying this in my Cabinet meetings. [*Laughter*] Certainly not if I'm presenting something like the Emancipation Proclamation. [*Laughter*] But what Lincoln understood is that the arts and the humanities aren't just there to be consumed and enjoyed whenever we have a free moment in our lives. We rely on them constantly. We need them. Like medicine, they help us live.

So, once again, I want to thank tonight's honorees for creating work that I'm sure would have met President Lincoln's high standards. In this complicated world, and in these challenging times, you've shared a song with us and enhanced the character of our country, and for that we are extraordinarily grateful.

It is now my privilege to present these medals to each of the recipients after their citation is read.

So, our outstanding Military Aides, please.

[*At this point, Lt. Col. Michael P. Wagner, USA, Army Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals, assisted by Maj. Steven M. Schreiber, USMC, Marine Corps Aide to the President.*]

I think now is a good time for everybody to stand up and give these outstanding winners—or recipients a big round of applause. Yay!

So congratulations to all of you. We could not be more appreciative of everything you've done. I was mentioning, as people were coming up, I've been personally touched by all sorts of these folks. I was mentioning to Maxine that when I was first writing my first book and trying to teach myself how to write, "The Women Warriors" was one of the books I read. After the book was done, Diane was one of the few interviews that was granted. [*Laughter*] I told Linda Ronstadt I had a little crush on her back in the day. [*Laughter*] So—and I know all of you have been touched similarly by these amazing people.

So we are very grateful to you. On behalf of Michelle and myself, as we're taking pictures with the recipients and the family—their families, please continue to enjoy the reception here.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:18 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to author Maxine Hong Kingston; syndicated radio talk show host Diane Rehm; and musician Linda Ronstadt. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citations.

Remarks on the Situation in Ukraine and an Exchange With Reporters
July 29, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody.

In the Netherlands, Malaysia, Australia, and countries around the world, families are still in shock over the sudden and tragic loss of nearly 300 loved ones senselessly killed when their civilian airliner was shot down over territory controlled by Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine. These grieving families and their nations are our friends and our allies. And amid our prayers and our outrage, the United States continues to do everything in our power to help bring home their loved ones, support the

international investigation, and make sure justice is done.

Since the shoot-down, however, Russia and its proxies in Ukraine have failed to cooperate with the investigation and to take the opportunity to pursue a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Ukraine. These Russian-backed separatists have continued to interfere in the crash investigation and to tamper with the evidence. They have continued to shoot down Ukrainian aircraft in the region. And because of their actions, scores of Ukrainian civilians continue to die needlessly every day.

Meanwhile, Russia continues to support the separatists and encourage them and train them and arm them. Satellite images, along with information we've declassified in recent days, show that forces inside Russia have launched artillery strikes into Ukraine, another major violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. And we have information that Russia continues to build up its own forces near the Ukrainian border and that more Russian military equipment, including artillery, armored vehicles, and air defense equipment, has been transferred across the border to these separatists.

Now, since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine, the United States has worked to build a strong international coalition to support Ukraine, its sovereignty, its territorial integrity, its right to determine its own destiny, and to increase the pressure on Russia for actions that have undermined Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and ability to make its own decisions. The core of that coalition is the United States and our European allies.

In recent days, I've continued to coordinate closely with our allies and our partners to ensure a unified response to the shoot-down of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 and Russia's continued arming of the separatists. And I've spoken several times with Prime Minister Rutte of the Netherlands and Prime Minister Abbott of Australia.

Yesterday I had a chance to speak with Prime Minister Cameron of the United Kingdom, President Hollande of France, Chancellor Merkel of Germany, and Prime Minister Renzi of Italy. We are united in our view that the situation in Ukraine ought to be resolved diplomatically and that a sovereign, independent Ukraine is no threat to Russian interests. But we've also made it clear, as I have many times, that if Russia continues on its current path, the cost on Russia will continue to grow. And today is a reminder that the United States means what it says. And we will rally the international community in standing up for the rights and freedom of people around the world.

Today, and building on the measures we announced 2 weeks ago, the United States is imposing new sanctions in key sectors of the Russian economy: energy, arms, and finance. We're blocking the exports of specific goods and technologies to the Russian energy sector. We're expanding our sanctions to more Russian banks and defense companies. And we're formally suspending credit that encourages exports to Russia and financing for economic development projects in Russia.

At the same time, the European Union is joining us in imposing major sanctions on Russia, its most significant and wide-ranging sanctions to date. In the financial sector, the EU is cutting off certain financing to state-owned banks in Russia. In the energy sector, the EU will stop exporting specific goods and technologies to Russia, which will make it more difficult for Russia to develop its oil resources over the long term. In the defense sector, the EU is prohibiting new arms imports and exports and is halting the export of sensitive technology to Russia's military users.

And because we're closely coordinating our actions with Europe, the sanctions we're announcing today will have an even bigger bite.

Now, Russia's actions in Ukraine and the sanctions that we've already imposed have made a weak Russian economy even weaker. Foreign investors already are increasingly staying away. Even before our actions today, nearly $100 billion in capital was expected to flee Russia. Russia's energy, financial, and defense sectors are feeling the pain. Projections for Russian economic growth are down to near zero. The major sanctions we're announcing today will continue to ratchet up the pressure on

Russia, including the cronies and companies that are supporting Russia's illegal actions in Ukraine.

In other words, today, Russia is once again isolating itself from the international community, setting back decades of genuine progress. And it doesn't have to come to this—it didn't have to come to this. It does not have to be this way. This is a choice that Russia, and President Putin in particular, has made. There continues to be a better choice: the choice of deescalation, the choice of joining the world in a diplomatic solution to this situation, a choice in which Russia recognizes that it can be a good neighbor and trading partner with Ukraine even as Ukraine is also developing ties with Europe and other parts of the world.

I'm going to continue to engage President Putin as well as President Poroshenko and our European partners in pursuit of such a diplomatic solution. But it is important for Russia to understand that, meanwhile, we will continue to support the people of Ukraine, who have elected a new President, who have deepened their ties with Europe and the United States, and that the path for a peaceful resolution to this crisis involves recognizing the sovereignty, the territorial integrity, and the independence of the Ukrainian people.

Today the people of Ukraine, I hope, are seeing once again that the United States keeps its word. We're going to continue to lead the international community in our support for the Ukrainian people and for the peace, the security, and the freedom that they very richly deserve.

Thanks very much.

Russia-U.S. Relations/Russia-Ukraine Relations

Q. Is this a new cold war, sir?

The President. No, it's not a new cold war. What it is, is a very specific issue related to Russia's unwillingness to recognize that Ukraine can chart its own path.

And I think that if you listen to President Poroshenko, if you listen to the Ukrainian people, they've consistently said they seek good relations with Russia. What they can't accept is Russia arming separatists who are carrying out terribly destructive activities inside of Ukraine, thereby undermining the ability of Ukraine to govern itself peacefully. That's something that no country should have to accept.

And the sooner that Russians recognize that the best chance for them to have influence inside of Ukraine is by being good neighbors and maintaining trade and commerce, rather than trying to dictate what the Ukrainian people can aspire to, rendering Ukraine a vassal state to Russia—the sooner that President Putin and Russia recognizes that, the sooner we can resolve this crisis in ways that doesn't result in the tragic loss of life that we've seen in eastern Ukraine.

[*At this point, several reporters spoke at once.*]

Go ahead.

International Sanctions Against Russia

Q. So far, sanctions haven't stopped Vladimir Putin. Are sanctions going to be enough? And are you considering lethal aid for Ukraine?

The President. Well, keep in mind, the issue at this point is not the Ukrainian capacity to outfight separatists. They are better armed than the separatists. The issue is, how do we prevent bloodshed in eastern Ukraine? We're trying to avoid that. And the main tool that we have to influence Russian behavior at this point is the impact that it's having on its economy.

The fact that we've seen Europeans, who have real, legitimate economic concerns in severing certain ties with Russia, stepping up the way they have today, I think, is an indication of both the waning patience that Europe has with nice words from President Putin that are not matched by actions, but also a recognition, as a consequence of what happened with the Malaysian Airlines flight, that it is hard to avoid the spillover of what's happening in Ukraine impacting Europeans across the board.

And so we think that the combination of stronger U.S. and European sanctions is going to have a greater impact on the Russian economy than we've seen so far. Obviously, we can't

in the end make President Putin see more clearly. Ultimately, that's something that President Putin has to do by—on his own. But what we can do is make sure that we've increased the costs for actions that I think are not only destructive to Ukraine, but ultimately, are going to be destructive to Russia, as well.

All right. Guys, I've got to get going.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:39 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Robert A. McDonald as Secretary of Veterans Affairs
July 29, 2014

I applaud the overwhelming, bipartisan confirmation of Bob McDonald as our next Secretary of Veterans Affairs. As a veteran himself and a proud member of a military family, Bob is deeply committed to serving our veterans and their families. And as an executive with decades of private-sector experience, he is uniquely equipped to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs and to help change the way the VA does business. As a country, we have a solemn duty to serve our veterans as well as they have served us. I know Bob will help us honor that commitment and make sure every veteran gets the care they deserve, the benefits they've earned, and the chance to pursue the American Dream they've risked so much to protect.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Lebanon
July 29, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Lebanon that was declared in Executive Order 13441 of August 1, 2007, is to continue in effect beyond August 1, 2014.

Certain ongoing activities, such as continuing arms transfers to Hizballah, which include increasingly sophisticated weapons systems, undermine Lebanese sovereignty, contribute to political and economic instability in the region, and continue to constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13441 with respect to Lebanon.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 29, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks in Kansas City, Missouri
July 30, 2014

The President. Hello, Kansas City! Well, it is good to be back in Kansas City, back in the Midwest. And I have to say, I love these old theaters. I mean, they are unbelievable. This is just gorgeous.

The—it is good to see Governor Jay Nixon here today. Congressman Emanuel Cleaver is here. Congressman Lacy Clay is here. Mayor Sly James is here. And you're here! All of you are here.

Now, if you have a seat, feel free to sit down, because I don't want everybody starting to fall out. [*Laughter*] If you don't have a seat, don't sit down. But bend your knees a little bit.

It's always good to spend a little time in Kansas City. Last night, I had a chance to get some barbecue at Arthur Bryant's. Now, they had run out of coleslaw, which I asked—I said, did you save some coleslaw for me? They said, no, they hadn't saved any.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. The—I'm sorry, what are you hollering about?

Audience member. Jesus is the God of Israel. He is fully God.

The President. I believe in God. Thanks for the prayer. Amen. Thank you. Now——

Audience members. We love you! We love you! We love you!

The President. Thank you. Now, before—I just want to be on record, though, because people have been asking me this question. I deal with a lot of tough issues. I am not going to decide who makes the best barbecue in Kansas City. [*Laughter*] Bryant's barbecue was tasty. And Victor is right, I did plow through it pretty good. [*Laughter*] But I have not had enough samples to make a definitive judgment, so I'm going to have to try some other barbecue next time I come in. I have to say, by the way, Victor was not shy about eating either. [*Laughter*] So I just want to be clear.

But I had a chance—I went there for the barbecue, but also I went there because I wanted to have a chance to talk to Victor and three other people from the area who took the time to sit down with me and talk, because they had written letters to me. Some of you may know——

Audience member. I wrote you too! [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, you know what, if I had known, I would have had you over for dinner too. [*Laughter*]

But what happens is, every night, I read 10 letters that we receive. We get 40,000 correspondence. And then our Correspondence Office chooses 10, sort of a sample for me to take a look at. And it gives me a chance to hear directly from the people I serve. And folks tell me their stories. They tell me their worries and their hopes and their hardships, their successes. Some say I'm doing a good job. But other people say, "You're an idiot."

Audience members. No!

The President. No, no, I mean, this is how I know that I'm getting a good sample of letters. [*Laughter*]

Last week, a young girl wrote to ask me, why aren't there any women on our currency? And then she gave me, like, a long list of possible women to put on our dollar bills and quarters and stuff, which I thought was a pretty good idea.

And, now, Victor wrote to me to tell me about his life in Butler, and he told me that he had been unemployed for a while after he and his wife had had their first child. But he refused to quit. He earned his degree, found a full-time job. He now helps folks with disabilities live independently. And he's just a good-hearted man. And you can tell, really, he's doing great stuff. And Victor described how he got through some tough times because of his Christian faith and his determination, which are things that government programs and policies can't replace. You've got to have that sense of purpose and perseverance. That has to come from inside; you can't legislate that.

But he also said that he was able to afford health insurance because of the Affordable Care Act. And he also said that because of the income-based repayment plan that we had put

in place, where you only have to pay 10 percent of your income maximum in repaying your loans each month, that was what allowed him and his family to keep a roof over their heads and support themselves.

And so I'm here because Victor is the sort of person I'm working for every single day, somebody who never quits, somebody who is doing everything right, somebody who believes in the American Dream. Somebody who just wants a chance to build a decent life for himself and his family. And that's the vast majority of Americans. That's who I'm fighting for right here in Kansas City and all across this country. That's why I ran for President in the first place, to fight for folks like that.

Now, we all know it hasn't always been easy. The crisis that hit near the end of my campaign back in 2008, it would end up costing millions of Americans their jobs, their homes, their sense of security. But we have fought back. We have got back off our feet, we have dusted ourselves off. Today, our businesses have added nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. Construction is up. Manufacturing is back. Our energy, our technology, our auto industries, they're all booming.

The unemployment rate is at its lowest point since September of 2008. It's dropped faster than any time in 30 years. This morning we found out that in the second quarter of this year, our economy grew at a strong pace, and businesses are investing, workers are building new homes, consumers are spending, America is exporting goods around the world.

So the decisions that we made—to rescue our economy, to rescue the auto industry, to rebuild the economy on a new foundation, to invest in research and infrastructure, education—all those things are starting to pay off.

The world's number-one oil and gas producer—it's not Saudi Arabia, it's not Russia, it's the United States of America. We've tripled—we've tripled—the amount of electricity we get from wind. We've increased by 10 times the amount of electricity we get from the sun. And all that is creating tens of thousands of jobs across the country.

Our high school graduation rate is at a record high. More young people are earning their college degrees than ever before; 401(k)s have recovered their value. Home prices are rising. And yes, millions of families now have the peace of mind, just like Victor's family does, of getting quality, affordable health care when you need it. It makes a difference in people's lives.

And look, Kansas City, none of this is an accident. It's thanks to the resilience and resolve of the American people. It's also thanks to some decisions that we made early on. And now America has recovered faster and come farther than just about any other advanced country on Earth. And for the first time in more than a decade, if you ask business leaders around the world what's the number-one place to invest, they don't say China anymore. They say the United States of America. And our lead is growing.

So sometimes, you wouldn't know it if you were watching the news, but there are a lot of good reasons to be optimistic about America. We hold the best cards. Things are getting better. The decisions we make now can make things even better than that. In fact, the decisions we make now will determine whether the economic gains that we're generating are broad based, whether they just go to a few at the top or whether we've got an economy in which the middle class is growing and folks who are trying to get into the middle class have more rungs on the ladder, right? Whether ordinary folks are benefiting from growth.

And that's what's at stake right now, making sure our economy works for every American. See, I'm glad that GDP is growing, and I'm glad that corporate profits are high, and I'm glad that the stock market is booming. But what really I want to see is a guy working 9 to 5 and then working some overtime, I want that guy making more than the minimum wage.

And what I really want is somebody who has worked for 20, 30 years being able to retire with some dignity and some respect. What I really want is a family that they have the capacity to save so that when their child is ready to go to college, they know they can help and that

it's affordable and that that child is not going to be burdened down with debt. That's the measure of whether the economy is working: not just how well it's doing overall, but is it doing well for ordinary folks who are working hard every single day and aren't always getting a fair shot? That's what we're fighting for. That's why I ran for President. That's what I'm focused on every day.

And that's what sometimes Washington forgets. Your lives and what you're going through day to day—the struggles, but also the opportunities and the hopes and the good things, but sometimes the rough things that happen—that's more important than some of the phony scandals or the fleeting stories that you see. This is the challenge of our time: How do we make sure we've got an economy that is working for everybody?

Now, all of you are doing your part to help bring America back. You're doing your job. Imagine how much further along we'd be, how much stronger our economy would be, if Congress was doing its job too. We'd be doing great. Every time I meet some of these folks who have written me letters, we sit down and talk, and they say, what's going on in Washington? Why—what they tell me is, if Congress had the same priorities that ordinary families did, if they felt the same sense of urgency about things like the cost of college or the need for increases in the minimum wage or how we're making childcare more affordable and improving early childhood education, if that's what they were thinking about, we could help a lot more families. A lot more people would be getting ahead. The economy would be doing better. We could help a lot more families, and we should.

We should be relentlessly focused on what I call an opportunity agenda, one that creates more jobs by investing in what's always made our economy strong: making sure that we're on the cutting edge when it comes to clean energy; making sure that we're rebuilding our infrastructure—our roads, our bridges, our ports, our airports, our locks, our dams; making sure that advanced manufacturing is happening right here in the United States so we can start bringing manufacturing jobs back to the Midwest and all across the country, jobs that pay a good wage; investing in research and science that leads to new American industries; training our workers—really making a job training program and using our community colleges in ways that allow people to constantly retrain for the new opportunities that are out there and to prepare our kids for the global competition that they're going to face; making sure that hard work pays off with higher wages and higher incomes.

If we do all these things, we're going to strengthen the middle class, we'll help more people get into the middle class. Businesses, by the way, will do better. If folks have more money in their pocket, then businesses have more customers. If businesses have more customers, they hire more workers. You hire more workers, they spend more money. You spend more money, businesses have more customers, they hire even more workers. You start moving in the right direction. But it starts not from the top down, it starts from the middle out, the bottom up.

Now, so far this year, Republicans in Congress keep blocking or voting down just about every idea that would have some of the biggest impact on middle class and working class families. They've said no to raising the minimum wage. They've said no to fair pay, making sure that women have the ability to make sure that they're getting paid the same as men for doing the same job. They've said no for fixing our broken immigration system. Rather than investing in education, they actually voted to give another massive tax cut to the wealthiest Americans. And they've been pushing to gut the rules that we put in place after the financial crisis to make sure big banks and credit card companies wouldn't take advantage of consumers or cause another crisis. So they haven't been that helpful. [*Laughter*] They have not been as constructive as I would have hoped. [*Laughter*]

And these actions, they come with a cost. When you block policies that would help millions of Americans right now, not only are those families hurt, but the whole economy is hurt. So that's why this year, my administration, what

we've said was, we want to work with Congress, we want to work with Republicans and Democrats to get things going, but we can't wait. So, if they're not going to do anything, we'll do what we can on our own. And we've taken more than 40 actions aimed at helping hard-working families like yours. That's when we act: when Congress won't.

So, when Congress failed to pass equal pay legislation, I made sure that women got more protection in their fight for fair pay in the workplace, because I think that when women succeed, everybody succeeds. I want my daughters paid the same as your sons for doing the same job.

Congress had the chance to pass a law that would help lower interest rates on student loans. They didn't pass it. I acted on my own to give millions of Americans a chance to cap their payments, the program that Victor has taken advantage of. I don't want our young people just saddled with debt before they've even gotten started in life.

When it comes to the minimum wage, last week marked 5 years since the last time the minimum wage went up. Now, you know the cost of living went up. The minimum wage didn't go up. So I went ahead on my own. When it came to Federal contractors, I said, you want to get a Federal contract, you've got to pay your workers at least $10.10 an hour. And I've been trying to work with Governors and mayors, and in some cases with business owners, just calling them up directly. How about giving your folks a raise? And some of them have done it.

And since I had first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, businesses like the Gap, you've got 13 States and DC, they've gone ahead and raised their minimum wage. It makes a difference in people's lives. And by the way, here's something interesting: The States that have increased their minimum wage this year, they've seen higher job growth than the States that didn't increase their minimum wage. So remember, you give them a little bit more money, businesses have more customers. They've got more customers, they make more profit. They make more profit, what do they do? They hire more workers. America deserves a raise, and it's good for everybody.

So some of the things we're doing without Congress are making a difference, but we could do so much more if Congress would just come on and help out a little bit. [*Applause*] Just come on. Come on and help out a little bit. Stop being mad all the time. Stop just hating all the time. [*Laughter*] Come on. Let's get some work done together. [*Laughter*]

We actually—they did pass this workforce training act, and it was bipartisan. There were Republicans and Democrats, and everybody was all pleased. They came, we had a bill signing, and they were all in their suits. I said, didn't—doesn't this feel good? [*Laughter*] We're doing something. It's, like, useful. We're not—nobody is shouting at each other. [*Laughter*] You know? It was really nice. I said, let's do this again. Let's do it more often.

I mean, I know they're not that happy that I'm President, but that's okay. [*Laughter*] Come on. I've only got a couple of years left. Come on, let's get some work done. Then you can be mad at the next President.

Look, we've got just today and tomorrow until Congress leaves town for a month. And we've still got some serious work to do. We've still got a chance to—we've got to put people to work rebuilding roads and bridges. And then, the highway trust fund is running out of money; we've got to get that done. We've got to get some resources to fight wildfires out West. That's a serious situation. We need more resources to deal with the situation in the southern part of the border, right, with some of those kids. We've got to be able to deal with that in a proper way.

So there's a bunch of stuff that needs to get done. Unfortunately, I think the main vote—correct me if I'm wrong here, Congressman—the main vote that they've scheduled for today is whether or not they decide to sue me for doing my job.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, no. First of all, don't—first of all, here's something I always

say: Do not boo, vote. Booing doesn't help. Voting helps.

But think about this. The—they have announced that they're going to sue me for taking executive actions to help people. So they're mad because I'm doing my job. And by the way, I've told them—I said, I'd be happy to do it with you. So the only reason I'm doing it on my own is because you don't do anything. But if you want, let's work together.

Now, I mean, everybody recognizes this is a political stunt, but it's worse than that, because every vote they're taking like that means a vote they're not taking to actually help you. When they had taken 50 votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act, that was time that could have been spent working constructively to help you on some things. And by the way, you know who is paying for this suit they're going to file? You.

Audience member. No!

The President. No, no, you're paying for it. And it's estimated that by the time the thing was done, I would have already left office. So it's not a productive thing to do.

But here's what I want people to remember. Every single day, as depressing sometimes as what goes on in Washington may be, I see the inherent goodness and generosity of the American people. I see it every day. I see it in all of you. I saw it in the four people that I had dinner with last night.

In addition to Victor, one guy who joined us was a guy named Mark Turner. He works with high school dropouts to help get them back on track. He used to be a successful corporate executive, decided he wanted to give something back. You've got Valerie McCaw. Valerie is a single mom, engineer, owns a small business. She's doing great things. Even though sometimes it's a struggle making sure that she keeps her business afloat, she's persevered and is helping her son get his college education. Then you've got Becky Forrest. She's a fireplug. She's president of the Town Fork Creek Neighborhood Association. She's got so many things going on—after-school programs and mentoring programs and basketball leagues and all kinds of things at a community center—I couldn't keep track of all of them. [*Laughter*]

And to listen to them talk, it made you optimistic. It reminded you there are good people out here. Everybody is out there trying to do their best, trying to look after their families, trying to raise their kids, trying to give something back, working with their church, working with their synagogues, working with their places of faith. Just trying to give something back and give some meaning to their lives. And they're responsible. And we all make mistakes, and we all have regrets, but generally speaking, people are decent.

And so the question is, how can we do a better job at capturing that spirit in Washington, in our Government? Because the American people are working harder than ever to support families, to strengthen communities. And so, instead of suing me for doing my job, let's—I want Congress to do its job and make life a little better for the Americans who sent them there in the first place. Stop posturing.

And by the way, just—there's one place to start. I talked about this last week, but I want to talk about it a little more. Right now there's a loophole in the Tax Code that lets a small, but growing group of corporations leave the country; say—they declare themselves no longer American companies just to get out of paying their fair share of taxes, even though most of their operations are here, they've always been American companies, they took advantage of all the benefits of being an American company, but now their accountant has convinced them maybe they can get out of paying some taxes.

They're renouncing their citizenship even though they're keeping most of their business here. And I mean, it's just an accounting trick, but it hurts our country's finances, and it adds to the deficits and sticks you with the tab, because if they're not paying their share and stashing their money offshore, you're paying—you don't have that option. It ain't right. Not only is it not right, it ain't right. [*Laughter*] So—[*applause*]. It ain't right. I hope everybody is clear on the distinction. There are some things are not right. And then, there's some things that just ain't right. [*Laughter*] And this is—this ain't right. [*Laughter*]

I mean, you don't have accountants figuring all this stuff out for you, trying to game the system. These companies shouldn't either. And they shouldn't turn their back on the country that made their success possible. And by the way, this can be fixed. For the last 2 years, I've put forward plans to cut corporate taxes, make—close loopholes, make it more reliable, make it clearer. And to Republicans, I say, join with me. Let's work to close this unpatriotic tax loophole for good. Let's use the savings that we get from closing the loophole to invest in things like education that are good for everybody.

Don't double down on top-down economics. Let's really fight to make sure that everybody gets a chance and, by the way, that everybody plays by the same rules. We could do so much more if we got that kind of economic patriotism that says we rise or fall as one Nation and as one people. And that's what Victor believes.

When Victor wrote me his letter, he said, "I believe, regardless of political party, we can all do something to help our citizens to have a chance at a job, have food in their stomachs, have access to great education and health care." That's what economic patriotism is. That's what we should all be working on.

Instead of tax breaks for folks who don't need them, let's give tax breaks to working families for—to help them pay for childcare and college. Don't reward companies shipping jobs overseas; let's give tax breaks to companies investing right here in Missouri, right here in the Midwest. Let's give every citizen access to preschool and college and affordable health care. And let's make sure women get a fair wage. Let's make sure anybody who is working full-time isn't living in poverty.

These are not un-American ideas, these are patriotic ideas. This is how we built America.

So just remember this: The hardest thing to do is to bring about real change. It's hard. You've got a stubborn status quo. And folks in Washington, sometimes, they're focused on everything but your concerns. And there are special interests, and there are lobbyists, and they're paid to maintain the status quo that's working for somebody. And they're counting on you getting cynical so you don't vote and you don't get involved and people just say, you know what, none of this is going to make a difference. And the more you do that, then the more power the special interests have, and the more entrenched the status quo becomes.

You can't afford to be cynical. Cynicism is fashionable sometimes. You see it all over our culture, all over TV; everybody likes just putting stuff down and being cynical and being negative, and that shows somehow that you're sophisticated and you're cool. You know what, cynicism didn't put a man on the Moon. Cynicism didn't win women the right to vote. Cynicism did not get a Civil Rights Act signed. Cynicism has never won a war. Cynicism has never cured a disease. Cynicism has never started a business. Cynicism has never fed a young mind.

I do not believe in a cynical America; I believe in an optimistic America that is making progress. And I believe despite unyielding opposition, there are workers right now who have jobs who didn't have them before because of what we've done and folks who got health care who didn't have it because of the work that we've done and students who are going to college who couldn't afford it before and troops who've come home after tour after tour of duty because of what we've done.

You don't have time to be cynical. Hope is a better choice. That's what I need you for.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:06 a.m. at the Uptown Theater. In his remarks, he referred to Victor L. Fugate, Jr., service coordinator, Missouri Department of Mental Health's Casco Area Workshop, Inc., who introduced the President, his wife Tifany, and their daughter Michaiah; Mark Turner, career coach, Full Employment Council, Inc.; and Valerie McCaw, president and owner, VSM Engineering LLC.

Joint Statement by Group of Seven Leaders on the Situation in Ukraine
July 30, 2014

We, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, the President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission, join in expressing our grave concern about Russia's continued actions to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. We once again condemn Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, and actions to de-stabilize eastern Ukraine. Those actions are unacceptable and violate international law.

We condemn the tragic downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 and the deaths of 298 innocent civilians. We demand a prompt, full, unimpeded, and transparent international investigation. We call upon all sides to establish, maintain, and fully respect a cease-fire at and around the crash site, as demanded by UN Security Council resolution 2166, so that the investigators can take up their work and to recover the remains of all victims and their personal possessions.

This terrible event should have marked a watershed in this conflict, causing Russia to suspend its support for illegal armed groups in Ukraine, secure its border with Ukraine, and stop the increasing flow of weapons, equipment, and militants across the border in order to achieve rapid and tangible results in de-escalation.

Regrettably, however, Russia has not changed course. This week, we have all announced additional coordinated sanctions on Russia, including sanctions on specific companies operating in key sectors of the Russian economy. We believe it is essential to demonstrate to the Russian leadership that it must stop its support for the separatists in eastern Ukraine and tangibly participate in creating the necessary conditions for the political process.

We remain convinced that there must be a political solution to the current conflict, which is causing rising numbers of civilian casualties. We call for a peaceful settlement of the crisis in Ukraine and underline the need to implement President Poroshenko's peace plan without any further delay. To this end, we urge all parties to establish a swift, genuine, and sustainable general cease-fire on the basis of the Berlin Declaration of 2 July with the aim of maintaining Ukraine's territorial integrity. We call upon Russia to use its influence with the separatist groups and ensure effective border control, including through OSCE observers. We support the OSCE and the Trilateral Contact Group as central players in creating the conditions for a ceasefire.

Russia still has the opportunity to choose the path of de-escalation, which would lead to the removal of these sanctions. If it does not do so, however, we remain ready to further intensify the costs of its adverse actions.

NOTE: The joint statement referred to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks on Signing an Executive Order on Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces
July 31, 2014

Hello, everybody, hello! Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. Welcome to the White House.

The Executive order I'll sign in a few minutes is one that's good for workers, it's good for responsible employers, and it's good for the middle class. And that explains the folks who are standing up on stage with me, including Secretary of Labor Tom Perez, who's done a great job on this.

Yesterday we learned that the springtime was a strong time for economic growth.

Companies are investing. Consumers are spending. Our energy, our technology, our auto industries are all booming, with workers making and selling goods all around the world. Our businesses have created nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months, and the unemployment rate is at its lowest point since 2008; 401(k)s have recovered their value. Home prices are rising. Millions more families have the peace of mind that comes with having affordable, quality health care.

And because of the incredible hard work and resilience of the American people, we've recovered faster, we've come farther than any other advanced country since the onset of the great depression—great recession. Things are getting better. [*Applause*] Things are getting better. Steadily, things are getting better. But we all know there's more work to do. And the decisions we make now are going to have an impact on whether or not this economy works for everybody or just folks at the top, whether we've got a growing economy that fuels rising incomes and creates a thriving middle class and ladders into the middle class.

That's what's at stake: making sure our economy works for every hard-working American, and if you work hard and you're responsible, you can get ahead. That's what we want. We want to make sure the young dad on the factory floor has a shot to make it into the corner suite or at least see his daughter make it there some day.

That's why I ran for office. That's what has driven every policy that we've initiated this year and since the advent of my Presidency. Policies that create more jobs rebuilding America. Policies to ease the student loan burden. Policies to raise wages for workers and make sure that women are being paid fairly on the job; and creating opportunities for paid leave for working families and support for childcare.

These are all policies that have two things in common. Number one, they'd all help working families. And frankly, number two, they're being blocked or ignored by Republicans in Congress. So I've said to my team, look, any time Congress wants to do work with me to help working families, I'm right there. The door is always open. More than that, I'm going to—I'll go to them. I'll wash their car—[*laughter*]—walk their dog. [*Laughter*] I mean, I'm ready to work with them any time that they want to pursue policies that help working families. But where they're doing so little or nothing at all to help working families, then we've got to find ways, as an administration, to take action that's going to help.

And so far this year, we've made sure that more women have the protection they need to fight for fair pay in the workplace, because I believe when women succeed, America succeeds. We've acted to give millions of Americans the chance to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their income. I don't want young people to be so saddled with debt that they can't get started in life.

We've acted on our own to make sure Federal contractors can't discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity, because you shouldn't be fired because of who you love. If you're doing the job, you should be treated fairly and judged on your own merits.

We acted to require Federal contractors to pay their workers a fair wage of $10.10 an hour. And we've gone out, and we've worked with States and cities and business owners to join us on our 10–10 campaign, and more and more are joining us, because folks agree that if you work full time in this country, you shouldn't be raising your family in poverty. That's a pretty simple principle that we all believe in.

So the American people are doing their job. I've been traveling around the country meeting them. They're working hard. They're meeting their responsibilities. Here at the—in the executive branch, we're doing our job, trying to find ways in which we can help working families. Think about how much further along we'd be if Congress would do its job.

Instead, the big event last night, it wasn't a vote on the minimum wage. [*Laughter*] It wasn't a vote on immigration reform, strengthening the borders. It wasn't a vote on family leave. What did they have a vote on? [*Laughter*] They got together in the House of Repre-

sentatives, the Republicans, and voted to sue me for taking the actions that I—that we are doing to help families. [*Laughter*]

One of the main objections that's the basis of this suit is us making a temporary modification to the health care law that they said needed to be modified. [*Laughter*] They—so they criticized a provision; we modify it to make it easier for business to transition, and that's the basis for their suit.

Now, you could say that, all right, this is a harmless political stunt, except it wastes America's time. You guys are all paying for it as taxpayers. It's not very productive. But it's not going to stop me from doing what I think needs to be done in order to help families all across this country.

So we've got too much work to do. And I said to Speaker Boehner, tell your caucus the best way to avoid me acting on my own is work with me to actually do something. Then you don't have to worry about it. We're not going to stop, and if they're not going to lift a finger to help working Americans, then I'm going to work twice as hard to help working Americans. They can join me if they want. I hope they do. But at least they should stop standing in the way of America's success. We've got too much to do.

So today I'm taking another action, one that protects workers and taxpayers alike. Every year, our Government signs contracts with private companies for everything from fighter jets to flapjacks, computers to pencils. And we expect our tax dollars to be spent wisely on these contracts, to get what we pay for on time, on budget. And when companies that receive Federal contracts employ about 28 million Americans—about one in five workers in America work for a company that has a Federal contract—we also expect that our tax dollars are being used to ensure that these jobs are good jobs.

Our tax dollars shouldn't go to companies that violate workplace laws. They shouldn't go to companies that violate worker rights. If a company is going to receive taxpayer money, it should have safe workplaces. It should pay its workers the wages they've earned. It should provide the medical leave workers are entitled to. It should not discriminate against workers.

But one study found that more than one in four companies that have poor records on these areas also still get contracts from the Federal Government. And another study found that the worst violators are also the ones who end up missing performance or cost or schedule targets or even overbill the Government, ripping off the taxpayers altogether, which makes sense. I mean, if you think about it, if you've got a company that isn't treating its workers with integrity, isn't taking safety measures seriously, isn't taking overtime laws seriously, then they're probably cutting corners in other areas too.

And I want to be clear, the vast majority of the companies that contract with our Government, they play by the rules. They live up to the right workplace standards. But some don't. And I don't want those who don't to be getting a contract and getting a competitive advantage over the folks who are doing the right thing. Right? That's not fair.

Because the ones that don't play by the rules, they're not just failing their workers, they're failing all of us. It's a bad deal for taxpayers when we've got to pay for poor performance or sloppy work. Responsible companies that follow the law are likelier to have workers and workplaces that provide a better return for our tax dollar. They should not have to compete on an unfair playing field with companies that undercut them by breaking the law. In a race to the bottom, nobody wins.

So, over the past few years, my administration has taken steps to make the contracting process smarter. But many of the people who award contracts don't always have the information that they need to make sure contracts go to responsible companies. So the Executive order I'm signing today is going to do a few things.

Number one, it will hold corporations accountable by requiring potential contractors to disclose labor law violations from the past 3 years before they can receive a contract. It's going to crack down on the worst violators by

giving agencies better tools to evaluate egregious or repeated offenses.

It will give workers better and clearer information on their paychecks so they can be sure they're getting paid what they've owed. It will give more workers who may have been sexually assaulted or had their civil rights violated their day in court.

It will ease compliance burdens for business owners around the country by streamlining all types of reporting requirements across the Federal Government. So this is a first step in a series of actions to make it easier for companies, including small businesses, to do business with the Government. So we're going to protect responsible companies that play by the rules, make it easier for them, try to reduce the paperwork, the burdens that they have. They'll basically check a box that says they don't have these violations. We want to make it easier for good corporate citizens to do business with us.

But—and by the way, for companies that have violations, our emphasis is not going to be on punishments. It is to give them a chance to follow good workplace practices and come into compliance with the law. If you want to do business with the United States of America, you've got to respect our workers, you've got to respect our taxpayers.

And we'll spend a lot of time working with and listening to business owners so we can implement this thoughtfully and make it manageable for everybody. But the goal here is to make sure this action raises standards across the economy; encourages contractors to adopt better practices for all their employees, not just those working on Federal contracts; give responsible businesses that play by the rules a fairer shot to compete for business; streamline the process; improve wages and working conditions for folks who work hard every single day to provide for their families and contribute to our country.

And even though it is an executive action, I want to acknowledge and thank the Members of Congress who support it and who always stand up for America's workers. And most of them are stuck at Capitol Hill, but I just want to mention their names anyway: Tom Harkin; Rosa DeLauro; Keith Ellison is here; Raul Grijalva; Eleanor Holmes Norton. They've all been working on these issues, so I want to thank those Members of Congress.

The Executive order I sign today, like all the other actions I've taken, are not going to fix everything immediately. If I had the power to raise the Federal minimum wage on my own or enact fair pay and paid leave for every worker on my own or make college more affordable on my own, I would have done so already. If I could do all that, I would have gotten everything done, like, in my first 2 years. [*Laughter*] Because these policies make sense. But even though I can't do all of it, that shouldn't stop us from doing what we can. That's what these policies will do.

And I'm going to keep on not just working with Democrats, but also reach out to Republicans to get things moving faster for the middle class. We can do a lot more. We need a Congress that's willing to get things done. We don't have that right now. In the meantime, I'm going to do whatever I can, wherever I can, whenever I can, to keep this country's promise alive for more and more of the American people.

So thank you all. We're going to just keep on at this thing, chipping away. And I'm confident that when we look back, we'll see that these kinds of executive actions build some of the momentum and give people the confidence and the hope that ultimately leads to broad-based changes that we need to make sure that this economy works for everybody. All right?

Thank you so much. I'm going to sign this Executive order.

[*At this point, the President signed the Executive order.*]

There you go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Executive Order 13673, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Department of Housing and Urban Development
July 31, 2014

Thank you. Now, let me start off by making two points. The first is, clearly, HUD has the rowdiest employees. I now realize that. The second point is that before I came out here, Shaun Donovan made a point of saying that this wasn't as exciting to people as Michelle coming. [*Laughter*] Now, I know that. [*Laughter*] I hear that everywhere I go. [*Laughter*] There's no reason to remind me, to rub it in. [*Laughter*] That's why I married her. To improve the gene pool. [*Laughter*]

I am here today because I stole one terrific Secretary of HUD from you, but I've delivered another terrific Secretary of HUD to you. And I want to thank all of you for the great job that you're doing day in and day out. And we appreciate the Members of Congress who are here—although I have to say that Joaquin didn't really have a choice. [*Laughter*] The other two, obviously, they care. [*Laughter*] The brother, he's, like, okay, I've got to show up. [*Laughter*] But I appreciate them being here.

Let me just say a few words about Shaun. From his first day when he got here, Shaun knew he had his work cut out for him. You will recall that the housing market was the epicenter of the crisis that went through in 2008, 2009. There were millions of families whose homes were underwater. Hundreds of thousands of construction workers were out of a job. Too many veterans lived out on the street.

But we were very fortunate because Shaun is just one of those people where, he sees a problem, he's going to work to solve it. And if what he tries the first time doesn't work, he's going to try something else. And he's just kind of—he's a geek, he's a wonk. [*Laughter*] He studies the spreadsheets. He recruited top talent. He promised that if everyone here at HUD worked just a little bit harder, you could really turn things around for struggling families. And all of you accepted that challenge.

We've still got work to do, but think about the progress that we've made. Home prices, home sales, construction all up. Veterans' homelessness down by nearly 25 percent. Millions of families are now seeing their home values above water, which obviously is a huge relief for them. When natural disasters strike, like the Colorado floods or Hurricane Sandy, you are right in there helping families rebuild.

And a lot of that is thanks to Shaun; a lot of it is thanks to the fact that all of you under his leadership took up the challenge and you remembered what it is that this agency is about.

I love the way that your new Secretary characterized it. This is—this should be a department of opportunity. And housing, for so many people, is symbolic of the American Dream. It means that you've got something stable, something you can count on, something that you own. And to watch the transformation that has happened around the country—first and foremost because of the resiliency of the American people and their hard work—but also because that every step of the way you were in there trying to help them—that really makes a difference.

So I could not be prouder of the work that Shaun did. But I can tell you that nobody is more passionate about these issues than Julián. He knows the difference between smart policy and investments that can make a difference and just talk. And he's all about action, not just talk.

He's seen it firsthand in how he grew up. He's seen it firsthand as a mayor. He revitalized parts of San Antonio that had been neglected for a long time. He helped the Eastside Promise Zone take root and to grow. He championed the kind of investments that keep communities strong over the long term, like economic development and expanded early childhood education. And most of all, he knows how to lead a team. And this is a big team, and you guys have gotten some big things done. But we've got a lot more to do. Even bigger things need to get done.

So what—in talking to Julián and initially trying to persuade him to take this task, what I saw was that spirit of hard work that's reflected in how he was brought up and the values that

were instilled in him. And he, every single day, wants to make sure that those values live out in the work that he does.

And I know everybody in this room, you've got a story to tell too about somebody who, along the way, gave you some opportunity; about somebody who—maybe you were, like me, raised by a single mom and—like that first apartment that really—had your own bedroom, and it was clean. [*Laughter*] And it was in a decent neighborhood and there was a decent school district. And how happy everybody was, and the transformation that could take place in people's lives. That's a story I want you to tap into every day that you come to work.

Sometimes, work in Washington can be discouraging. Sometimes, it seems as if the agenda that you're trying to pursue helping working families and middle class families, sometimes, it seems that's not the priorities up on Capitol Hill. But if you remember why you got into this work in the first place, if you remember that this is not just a job, but it should also be a passion, that it should also be part of giving back, that you shouldn't just be checking in and punching the clock, but every single day, there's somebody out there who could use your help—and I know when they get that help, and they write letters to me, and they'll tell me, you know what, you transformed my life—there's no better feeling on Earth than that feeling that you somehow played a small part in a family succeeding.

And that success then lasts generations, because some child or grandchild suddenly is feeling better, and they start doing better in school, and maybe they avoided getting into trouble and ending up in the criminal justice system or dropping out of school and not being able to find a job—all because of what you did. What an incredible privilege that is. What an incredible honor.

And that's the attitude I want you to have every single day that you're here. I tell folks, I've now been President for more than 5½ years, and I've got 2½ years left, and I want to squeeze every single day—I want to squeeze as much out of every single day. This is not just a job, this is a privilege that we have. And we've got to do—we've got to take advantage of it. We've got to seize it. Because that's what makes it worthwhile.

It's something that when I travel around the country, I try to describe, because people are so inundated with cynicism and bad news, and I want to tell them a story of good news. There are people in agencies like HUD, every single day, they care about you, and they want to help you. And big organizations are never going to be perfect, and there are always going to be some bureaucracies, there's always going to be some redtape, there's always going to be some things that don't work quite as smoothly as we want. And your job is to fix that stuff or work around that stuff.

And I want everybody here to—when you're working with this new Secretary, who's got energy and drive, he's young, he's good-looking, he talks good—you can't let him down. [*Laughter*] You've got to be open to try new things and doing things in a different way and doing them better. But more importantly, you can't let those families out there down, because they're counting on you.

So I'm eager to work with him, but more importantly, I'm eager to work with you. And every single day when you come to work, I just want you to know that I can't do my job unless you're doing your job. Julián can't do his job unless you're doing your job. And whether you are managing a financing program to build low-income or affordable housing, or you are helping with some of our initiatives like Promise Zones, or you are coordinating with regional offices—whatever your task, whether you are upper management or you're the new kid on the block who's coming in, you can really have an impact that lasts for generations.

Don't squander that. Don't succumb to the cynicism. Don't start thinking that this is just a job. Remember the mission that you've got. And if you do that, I guarantee you, under Julián's leadership, years from now you're going to be able to look back and really be proud of everything that you've accomplished, because there are going to be a whole lot of people's lives who are a lot better. All right?

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Shaun L.S. Donovan, Director, Office of Management and Budget, in his former capacity as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julián Castro; and Reps. Joaquin Castro, Al Green, and Filemon Vela, Jr.

Remarks at a Dinner Celebrating the 46th Anniversary of the Special Olympics
July 31, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Please have a seat. Good evening, everybody, and welcome to the White House. Everybody looks wonderful.

This is a truly special evening. And we are delighted to celebrate it with so many people from so many different walks of life. It is not often that you get Dikembe Mutombo, Steve Case, Stevie Wonder all in the same room. [*Laughter*] In fact, that may be the first time that they were ever in the same sentence.

We have just one of my favorite people performing tonight, Katy Perry. We are so grateful to her. I love Katy Perry. She is just a wonderful person. I've just met her mom, and now I know why she is such a wonderful person. But I just want everybody to know she is on tour right now, and so for her to take time out to do this is really special, and so we really want to say thank you to her for doing this.

The fact that so many accomplished, wonderful people are here is a testament to the impact that the Special Olympics has had on our Nation and has had on our world. This organization has touched so many lives. And tonight Michelle and I are thrilled that we get a chance to say thank you to everyone who's been a part of it.

When Eunice Kennedy Shriver began what would become the Special Olympics in her backyard over 50 years ago, it's not clear whether she could imagine how far and how fast it would end up going. Of course, knowing her, she probably did have a sense of where it was going to go. That's the kind of visionary that she was. I want to recognize all the members of the Shriver family who are here tonight and who continue to carry on the family's incredible tradition of service. Thanks.

Today, in more than 170 countries, Special Olympians are athletes of all kinds: skiers and speed skaters, sailors, cyclists, equestrians, and judo masters. They make extraordinary contributions to their communities. And I'm pride—proud to highlight a few of them here tonight.

Loretta Claiborne didn't just finish with the top 100 women runners in the Boston Marathon twice; she was also the first Special Olympian to speak to world leaders during the United Nations General Assembly. So we're very proud of Loretta. Where's Loretta—right here. There she is. Yay, Loretta! And by the way, during the receiving line, Loretta and Michelle compared arms. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. Hers were better. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, they were. [*Laughter*]

Tim Harris is a Special Olympian in basketball, poly hockey, volleyball, golf, and track and field. So he has all four seasons covered. [*Laughter*] Now he has a restaurant in Albuquerque called Tim's Place. The most popular item is the hugs Tim gives his customers, and so far, more than 42,000 have been served. Where's Tim? There he is right there. Yay, Tim! Tim is fired up. Tim is fired up, although, Tim, I didn't get a hug. [*Laughter*] Come on, man. Oh, here we go. All right, come on. Come on, man.

[*At this point, Tim Harris came to the stage and hugged the President.*]

Mr. Harris. I love you, Obama.

The President. I love you back.

See, you know, Presidents need some encouragement once in a while too. [*Laughter*]

That felt really good. That was nice. Thank you, Tim. [*Laughter*]

Brina Kei Maxino represented the Asia-Pacific region at the Special Olympics Global Youth Activation Summit when she was 16 years old. She was the first Filipina and the first teenager with Down Syndromes to do that, so let's give Brina a big round of applause. Yay, Brina! Yay!

And Deon Namiseb was a captain of Namibia's soccer team when they won silver in the 2007 World Games. Now he's a coach, he mentors orphans, he advocates for the rights of Namibians with intellectual disabilities. We are very proud of Deon. Here he is, right here—Deon. Hey!

Dustin Plunkett competed at the 2007 World Games too. He shared the stage with Yao Ming. He says, "Special Olympics saved my life." And now he's recruiting coaches so that the Special Olympics can keep growing. Dustin, where are you? There he is. Thank you, Dustin. Proud of you.

And Ricardo Thornton, Sr., is here with his wife Donna. He is an international ambassador for Special Olympics, a long-time employee of the Martin Luther King Memorial Library here in Washington, a proud father, a proud grandfather. I recently appointed him to the President's Committee for People With Intellectual Disabilities. A wonderful man, please give Ricardo a big round of applause.

And Frank Stephens is a Special Olympian from Virginia. And he is proud to be a Global Messenger, once spoke before a crowd of 10,000, writes eloquently about the pain and exclusion that comes when others don't accept you or treat you with the respect every human being deserves.

"I am very lucky," Frank has written. "Even though I was born with this intellectual disability, I do pretty well and have a good life. I live and work in the community. I count as friends the people I went to school with and the people I met in my job. Every day, I get closer to living a life like yours."

"Being compared to people like me," he once wrote, "should be considered a badge of honor. No one overcomes more than we do and still loves life so much." Give Frank a big round of applause.

So what Frank wrote, what all these people represent, is what the Special Olympics is all about: overcoming obstacles with love and kindness and generosity and healthy competition. It's about pride, and it's about teamwork, and it's about friendship. And it's about treating everybody with dignity and giving everybody a chance.

So those values are values that everybody could use. Those are values that the Special Olympics can teach all of us. And so it makes a lot of sense that the Special Olympics began here in America, a nation founded on the principles of human equality, on the promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for everybody, not just for some. A few organizations exemplify that principle and that promise better than this one, so I want to thank all of you for being a part of the Special Olympics. We are getting excited for the World Games in L.A. next year, and we hope you have a wonderful evening tonight.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Go head, eat up!

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:02 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dikembe Mutombo and Yao Ming, former centers, National Basketball Association's Houston Rockets; Stephen M. Case, chairman and chief executive officer, Revolution; musician Stevie Wonder; and musician Katy Perry and her mother Mary Perry Hudson.

The President's News Conference
August 1, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Happy Friday. I thought I'd take some questions, but first, let me say a few words about the economy.

This morning we learned that our economy created over 200,000 new jobs in July. That's on top of about 300,000 new jobs in June. So we are now in a 6-month streak with at least 200,000 new jobs each month. That's the first time that has happened since 1997. Over the past year, we've added more jobs than any year since 2006. And all told, our businesses have created 9.9 million new jobs over the past 53 months. That's the longest streak of private sector job creation in our history.

And as we saw on Wednesday, the economy grew at a strong pace in the spring. Companies are investing. Consumers are spending. American manufacturing, energy, technology, autos—all are booming. And thanks to the decisions that we've made and the grit and resilience of the American people, we've recovered faster and come farther from the recession than almost any other advanced country on Earth.

So the good news is, the economy clearly is getting stronger. Things are getting better. Our engines are revving a little bit louder. And the decisions that we make right now can sustain and keep that growth and momentum going.

Unfortunately, there are a series of steps that we could be taking to maintain momentum, and perhaps even accelerate it; there are steps that we could be taking that would result in more job growth, higher wages, higher incomes, more relief for middle class families. And so far, at least, in Congress, we have not seen them willing or able to take those steps.

I've been pushing for commonsense ideas like rebuilding our infrastructure in ways that are sustained over many years and support millions of good jobs and help businesses compete. I've been advocating on behalf of raising the minimum wage, making it easier for working folks to pay off their student loans; fair pay, paid leave. All these policies have two things in common: All of them would help working families feel more stable and secure, and all of them so far have been blocked or ignored by Republicans in Congress. That's why my administration keeps taking whatever actions we can take on our own to help working families.

Now, it's good that Congress was able to pass legislation to strengthen the VA. And I want to thank the chairmen and ranking members who were involved in that. It's good that Congress was able to at least fund transportation projects for a few more months before leaving town, although it falls far short of the kind of infrastructure effort that we need that would actually accelerate the economy. But for the most part, the big-ticket items, the things that would really make a difference in the lives of middle class families, those things just are not getting done.

Let's just take a recent example: immigration. We all agree that there's a problem that needs to be solved in a portion of our southern border. And we even agree on most of the solutions. But instead of working together—instead of focusing on the 80 percent where there is agreement between Democrats and Republicans, between the administration and Congress—House Republicans, as we speak, are trying to pass the most extreme and unworkable versions of a bill that they already know is going nowhere, that can't pass the Senate, and that if it were to pass the Senate, I would veto. They know it.

They're not even trying to actually solve the problem. This is a message bill that they couldn't quite pull off yesterday, so they made it a little more extreme so maybe they can pass it today. Just so they can check a box before they're leaving town for a month. And this is on an issue that they all insisted had to be a top priority.

Now, our efforts administratively so far have helped to slow the tide of child migrants trying to come to our country. But without additional resources and help from Congress, we're just not going to have the resources we need to fully solve the problem. That means, while they're out on vacation, I'm going to have to make some tough choices to meet the challenge, with or without Congress.

And yesterday, even though they've been sitting on a bipartisan immigration bill for over a year, House Republicans suggested that since they don't expect to actually pass a bill that I can sign, that I actually should go ahead

and act on my own to solve the problem. Keep in mind that just a few days earlier, they voted to sue me for acting on my own. And then, when they couldn't pass a bill yesterday, they put out a statement suggesting I should act on my own because they couldn't pass a bill.

So immigration has not gotten done. A student loan bill that would help folks who have student loan debt consolidate and refinance at lower rates, that didn't pass. The transportation bill that they did pass just gets us through the spring, when we should actually be planning years in advance. States and businesses are raising the minimum wage for their workers because this Congress is failing to do so.

Even basic things like approving career diplomats for critical ambassadorial posts aren't getting done. Last night, for purely political reasons, Senate Republicans, for a certain period of time, blocked our new Ambassador to Russia. It raised such an uproar that finally they went ahead and let our Russian Ambassador pass, at a time when we are dealing every day with the crisis in Ukraine.

They're still blocking our Ambassador to Sierra Leone, where there is currently an Ebola outbreak. They're blocking our Ambassador to Guatemala, even as they demand that we do more to stop the flow of unaccompanied children from Guatemala. There are a lot of things that we could be arguing about on policy—that's what we should be doing as a democracy—but we shouldn't be having an argument about placing career diplomats with bipartisan support in countries around the world where we have to have a presence.

So the bottom line is this: We have come a long way over the last 5½ years. Our challenges are nowhere near as daunting as they were when I first came into office. But the American people demand and deserve a strong and focused effort on the part of all of us to keep moving the country forward and to focus on their concerns. And the fact is, we could be much further along and we could be doing even better and the economy could be even stronger and more jobs could be created if Congress would do the job that the people sent them here to do.

And I will not stop trying to work with both parties to get things moving faster for middle class families and those trying to get into the middle class. When Congress returns next month, my hope is, is that instead of simply trying to pass partisan message bills on party lines that don't actually solve problems, they're going to be willing to come together to at least focus on some key areas where there's broad agreement. After all that we've had to overcome, our Congress should stop standing in the way of our country's success.

So with that, let me take a couple of questions. And I will start with Roberta Rampton of Reuters.

Situation in Gaza

Q. Thanks. I want to ask about the situation in the Middle East. And why do you think Israel should embrace a cease-fire in Gaza when one of its soldiers appears to have been abducted and when Hamas continues to use its network of tunnels to launch attacks? And also, have you seen Israel act at all on your call to do more to protect civilians?

The President. Well, first of all, I think it's important to note that we have—and I have—unequivocally condemned Hamas and the Palestinian factions that were responsible for killing two Israeli soldiers and abducting a third almost minutes after a cease-fire had been announced. And the U.N. has condemned them as well. And I want to make sure that they are listening: If they are serious about trying to resolve this situation, that soldier needs to be unconditionally released as soon as possible.

I have been very clear throughout this crisis that Israel has a right to defend itself. No country can tolerate missiles raining down on its cities and people having to rush to bomb shelters every 20 minutes or half hour. No country can or would tolerate tunnels being dug under their land that can be used to launch terrorist attacks.

And so not only have we been supportive of Israel in its right to defend itself, but in very concrete terms—for example, in support for the Iron Dome program that has intercepted rockets that are firing down on Israeli cities—

we've been trying to cooperate as much as we can to make sure that Israel is able to protect its citizens.

Now, at the same time, we've also been clear that innocent civilians in Gaza caught in the crossfire have to weigh on our conscience and we have to do more to protect them. A cease-fire was one way in which we could stop the killing, to step back, and to try to resolve some of the underlying issues that have been building up over quite some time. Israel committed to that 72-hour cease-fire, and it was violated. And trying to put that back together is going to be challenging, but we will continue to make those efforts.

And let me take this opportunity, by the way, to give Secretary John Kerry credit. He has been persistent. He has worked very hard. He has endured, on many occasions, really unfair criticism simply to try to get to the point where the killing stops and the underlying issues about Israel's security, but also the concerns of Palestinians in Gaza, can be addressed.

We're going to keep working towards that. It's going to take some time. I think it's going to be very hard to put a cease-fire back together again if Israelis and the international community can't feel confident that Hamas can follow through on a cease-fire commitment.

And it's not particularly relevant whether a particular leader in Hamas ordered this abduction. The point is, is that when they sign onto a cease-fire they're claiming to speak for all the Palestinian factions. And if they don't have control of them, and just moments after a cease-fire is signed, you have Israeli soldiers being killed and captured, then it's hard for the Israelis to feel confident that a cease-fire can actually be honored.

I'm in constant consultation with Prime Minister Netanyahu. Our national security team is in constant communication with the Israeli military. I want to see everything possible done to make sure that Palestinian civilians are not being killed. And it is heartbreaking to see what's happening there, and I think many of us recognize the dilemma we have. On the one hand, Israel has a right to defend itself, and it's got to be able to get at those rockets and those tunnel networks. On the other hand, because of the incredibly irresponsible actions on the part of Hamas to oftentimes house these rocket launches right in the middle of civilian neighborhoods, we end up seeing people who had nothing to do with these rockets ending up being hurt.

Part of the reason why we've been pushing so hard for a cease-fire is precisely because it's hard to reconcile Israel's legitimate need to defend itself with our concern with those civilians. And if we can pause the fighting, then it's possible that we may be able to arrive at a formula that spares lives and also ensures Israel's security. But it's difficult. And I don't think we should pretend otherwise. Okay?

Bill Plante [CBS News].

U.S. Foreign Policy/U.S. Influence in World Affairs/Ukraine/Arab-Israeli Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, like that cease-fire, you've called for diplomatic solutions not only in Israel and Gaza, but also in Ukraine, in Iraq, to very little effect so far. Has the United States of America lost its influence in the world? Have you lost yours?

The President. Yes. Look, this is a common theme that folks bring up. Apparently, people have forgotten that America, as the most powerful country on Earth, still does not control everything around the world. And so our diplomatic efforts often take time. They often will see progress and then a step backwards. That's been true in the Middle East. That's been true in Europe. That's been true in Asia. That's the nature of world affairs. It's not neat, and it's not smooth.

But if you look at, for example, Ukraine, we have made progress in delivering on what we said we would do. We can't control how Mr. Putin thinks. But what we can do is say to Mr. Putin, if you continue on the path of arming separatists with heavy armaments that, the evidence suggests, may have resulted in 300 innocent people on a jet dying, and that violates international law and undermines the integrity—territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine,

then you're going to face consequences that will hurt your country.

And there was a lot of skepticism about our ability to coordinate with Europeans for a strong series of sanctions. And each time, we have done what we said we would do, including this week, when we put in place sanctions that have an impact on key sectors of the Russian economy: their energy, their defense, and their financial systems.

It hasn't resolved the problem yet. I spoke to Mr. Putin this morning, and I indicated to him, just as we will do what we say we do in terms of sanctions, we'll also do what we say we do in terms of wanting to resolve this issue diplomatically if he takes a different position. If he respects and honors the right of Ukrainians to determine their own destiny, then it's possible to make sure that Russian interests are addressed that are legitimate and that Ukrainians are able to make their own decisions and we can resolve this conflict and end some of the bloodshed.

But the point is, though, Bill, that if you look at the 20th century and the early part of this century, there are a lot of conflicts that America doesn't resolve. That's always been true. That doesn't mean we stop trying. And it's not a measure of American influence on any given day or at any given moment that there are conflicts around the world that are difficult. The conflict in Northern Ireland raged for a very, very long time until finally something broke, where the parties decided that it wasn't worth killing each other.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflicts has been going on even longer than you've been reporting. [*Laughter*] And I don't think at any point was there a suggestion somehow that America didn't have influence just because we weren't able to finalize an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal.

You will recall that situations like Kosovo and Bosnia raged on for quite some time, and there was a lot more death and bloodshed than there has been so far in the Ukrainian situation before it ultimately did get resolved.

And so I recognize, with so many different issues popping up around the world, sometimes, it may seem as if this is an aberration or it's unusual. But the truth of the matter is, is that this is a big world out there and that as indispensable as we are to try to lead it, there's still going to be tragedies out there and there are going to be conflicts. And our job is to just make sure that we continue to project what's right, what's just, and that we're building coalitions of like-minded countries and partners in order to advance not only our core security interests, but also the interests of the world as a whole.

Q. Do you think you could have done more?

The President. On which one?

Q. On any of them? Ukraine?

The President. Well look, I think, Bill, that the nature of being President is that you're always asking yourself what more can you do. But with respect to, let's say, the Israeli-Palestinian issue, this administration invested an enormous amount to try to bring the parties together around a framework for peace and a two-state solution. John Kerry invested an enormous amount of time. In the end, it's up to the two parties to make a decision. We can lead them to resolve some of the technical issues and to show them a path, but they've got to want it.

With respect to Ukraine, I think that we have done everything that we can to support the Ukrainian Government and to deter Russia from moving further into Ukraine. But short of going to war, there are going to be some constraints in terms of what we can do if President Putin and Russia are ignoring what should be their long-term interests.

Right now if—what we've done is impose sufficient costs on Russia that, objectively speaking, they should—President Putin should want to resolve this diplomatically, get these sanctions lifted, get their economy growing again, and have good relations with Ukraine. But sometimes, people don't always act rationally, and they don't always act based on their medium- or long-term interests. That can't deter us though. We've just got to stay at it.

Wendell [Wendell Goler, Fox News].

Immigration Reform/Congressional Gridlock/Executive Action on Immigration/Export-Import Bank of the U.S.

Q. Mr. President, Republicans point to some of your Executive orders as reason, they say, that they can't trust you to implement legislation as they pass. That even if you don't buy that argument, do you hold yourself totally blameless in the inability, it appears, to reach agreement with the Republican-led House?

The President. Well, Wendell, let's just take the recent example of immigration. A bipartisan bill passed out of the Senate, cosponsored by not just Democrats, but some very conservative Republicans who recognized that the system currently is broken and if in fact we put more resources on the border, provide a path in which those undocumented workers who've been living here for a long time and may have ties here are coming out of the shadows, paying their taxes, paying a fine, learning English—if we fix the legal immigration system so it's more efficient, if we are attracting young people who may have studied here to stay here and create jobs here, that that all is going to be good for the economy, it's going to reduce the deficit, it might have forestalled some of the problems that we're seeing now in the Río Grande Valley with these unaccompanied children.

And so we have a bipartisan bill, Wendell, bipartisan agreement supported by everybody from labor to the evangelical community, to law enforcement. So the argument isn't between me and the House Republicans. It's between the House Republicans and Senate Republicans, and House Republicans and the business community, and House Republicans and the evangelical community. I'm just one of the people they seem to disagree with on this issue.

So that's on the comprehensive bill. So now we have a short-term crisis with respect to the Río Grande Valley. They say we need more resources, we need tougher border security in this area where these unaccompanied children are showing up. We agree. So we put forward a supplemental to give us the additional resources and funding to do exactly what they say we should be doing, and they can't pass the bill. They can't even pass their own version of the bill. So that's not a disagreement between me and the House Republicans; that's a disagreement between the House Republicans and the House Republicans.

The point is that on a range of these issues, whether it's tax reform, whether it's reducing the deficit, whether it's rebuilding our infrastructure, we have consistently put forward proposals that in previous years and previous administrations would not have been considered radical or left-wing; they would have been considered pretty sensible, mainstream approaches to solving problems. I'd include under that, by the way, the Affordable Care Act, but that's a whole other conversation.

And in circumstances where even basic, commonsense, plain-vanilla legislation can't pass because House Republicans consider it somehow a compromise of their principles or giving Obama a victory, then we've got to take action. Otherwise, we're not going to be making progress on the things that the American people care about.

Q. So will you take action—on the border supplemental, can you act alone?

The President. Well, I'm going to have to act alone because we don't have enough resources. We've already been very clear: We've run out of money. And we are going to have to reallocate resources in order to just make sure that some of the basic functions that have to take place down there, whether it's making sure that these children are properly housed or making sure we've got enough immigration judges to process their cases, that those things get done. We're going to have to reallocate some resources.

But the broader point, Wendell, is that if in fact House Republicans are concerned about me acting independently of Congress—despite the fact that I've taken fewer executive actions than my Republican predecessor or my Democratic predecessor before that or the Republican predecessor before that—then the easiest way to solve it is passing legislation. Get things done.

On the supplemental, we agreed on 80 percent of the issues. There were 20 percent of the issues that perhaps there were disagreements between Democrats and Republicans. As I said to one Republican colleague who was down here that I was briefing about some national security issues, why wouldn't we just go ahead and pass the 80 percent that we agree on and we'll try to work to resolve the differences on the other 20 percent? Why wouldn't we do that? And he didn't really have a good answer for it.

So there's no doubt that I can always do better on everything, including making additional calls to Speaker Boehner and having more conversations with some of the House Republican leadership. But in the end, the challenge I have right now is that they are not able to act even on what they say their priorities are, and they're not able to work and compromise even with Senate Republicans on certain issues. And they are—they consider what have been traditionally Republican-supported initiatives, they consider those as somehow a betrayal of the cause.

Take the example of the Export-Import Bank. This is an interesting thing that's happened. I mean, this is a program in which we help to provide financing to sell American goods and products around the world. Every country does this. It's traditionally been championed by Republicans. For some reason, right now the House Republicans have decided that we shouldn't do this, which means that when American companies go overseas and they're trying to close a sale on selling Boeing planes, for example, or a GE turbine or some other American product that has all kinds of subcontractors behind it and is creating all kinds of jobs and all sorts of small businesses depend on that sale, and that American company is going up against a German company or a Chinese company, and the Chinese and the American—German company are providing financing and the American company isn't, we may lose that sale.

Why—when did that become something that Republicans opposed? It would be like me having a car dealership for Ford, and the Toyota dealership offers somebody financing, and I don't. We will lose business and we'll lose jobs if we don't pass it.

So there are some big issues where I understand why we have differences. All right? On taxes, Republicans want to maintain some corporate loopholes I think need to be closed because I think that we should be giving tax breaks to families that are struggling with childcare or trying to save for a college education. On health care, obviously, their view is, is that we should not be helping folks get health care, even though it's through the private marketplace. My view is, is that in a country as wealthy as ours, we can afford to make sure that everybody has access to affordable care.

Those are legitimate policy arguments. But getting our Ambassadors confirmed? These are career diplomats, not political types. Making sure that we pass legislation to strengthen our borders and put more folks down there? Those shouldn't be controversial. And I think you'd be hard-pressed to find an example of where I wouldn't welcome some reasonable efforts to actually get a bill passed out of Congress that I could sign.

Last question, Michelle Kosinski [CNN].

Situation in Gaza/U.S. Foreign Policy/U.S. Leadership/U.S. Economic Recovery

Q. Thank you. You made the point that in certain difficult conflicts in the past, both sides had to reach a point where they were tired of the bloodshed.

The President. Right.

Q. Do you think that we are actually far from that point right now? And is it realistic to try to broker a cease-fire right now when there are still tunnel operations allowed to continue? Is that going to cause a change of approach from this point forward?

The President. Well, keep in mind that the cease-fire that had been agreed to would have given Israel the capability to continue to dismantle these tunnel networks, but the Israelis can dismantle these tunnel networks without going into major population centers in Gaza. So I think the Israelis are entirely right that these tunnel networks need to be dismantled.

There is a way of doing that while still reducing the bloodshed.

You are right that in past conflicts, sometimes, people have to feel deeply the costs. Anybody who has been watching some of these images, I'd like to think, should recognize the costs. You have children who are getting killed. You have women, defenseless, who are getting killed. You have Israelis whose lives are disrupted constantly and living in fear. And those are costs that are avoidable if we're able to get a cease-fire that preserves Israel's ability to defend itself and gives it the capacity to have an assurance that they're not going to be constantly threatened by rocket fire in the future and, conversely, an agreement that recognizes the Palestinian need to be able to make a living and the average Palestinian's capacity to live a decent life.

But it's hard. It's going to be hard to get there. I think that there's a lot of anger and there's a lot of despair, and that's a volatile mix. But we have to keep trying.

And it is—Bill asked earlier about American leadership. Part of the reason why America remains indispensable, part of the essential ingredient in American leadership is that we're willing to plunge in and try, where other countries don't bother trying. I mean, the fact of the matter is, is that in all these crises that have been mentioned, there may be some tangential risks to the United States. In some cases, as in Iraq and ISIS, those are dangers that have to be addressed right now, and we have to take them very seriously. But for the most part, these are not—the rockets aren't being fired into the United States. The reason we are concerned is because we recognize we've got some special responsibilities.

We have to be—have some humility about what we can and can't accomplish. We have to recognize that our resources are finite, and we're coming out of a decade of war and our military has been stretched very hard, as has our budget. Nevertheless, we try. We go in there, and we make an effort.

And when I see John Kerry going out there and trying to broker a cease-fire, we should all be supporting him. There shouldn't be a bunch of complaints and second-guessing about, well, it hasn't happened yet, or nitpicking before he's had a chance to complete his efforts. Because, I tell you what, there isn't any other country that's going in there and making those efforts.

And more often than not, as a consequence of our involvement, we get better outcomes: not perfect outcomes, not immediate outcomes, but we get better outcomes. And that's going to be true with respect to the Middle East. That's going to be true with respect to Ukraine. That's going to be certainly true with respect to Iraq.

And I think it's useful for me to end by just reminding folks that, in my first term, if I had a press conference like this, typically, everybody would want to ask about the economy and how come jobs weren't being created? And how come the housing market is still bad? And why isn't it working? Well, you know what, what we did worked. And the economy is better. And when I say that we've just had 6 months of more than 200,000 jobs that hasn't happened in 17 years, that shows you the power of persistence. It shows you that if you stay at it, eventually, we make some progress. All right?

Director of the Central Intelligence Agency John O. Brennan/Senate Intelligence Committee Report on the CIA's Rendition, Detention, and Interrogation (RDI) Program/Torture of Terrorism Suspects

Q. What about John Brennan?

Q. The Africa Summit—the Ebola?

The President. I thought that you guys were going to ask me how I was going to spend my birthday.

Q. Africa Summit, sir?

The President. What happened to the happy birthday thing?

Q. What about John Brennan?

Q. Happy birthday.

Q. Africa Summit?

Q. [*Inaudible*]—Democrats have called for his resignation?

The President. I will address two points. I'll address——

Q. What about Putin and Flight 17?

The President. Hold on, guys. Come on now. There's just——

Q. We're a little pent up.

Q. The Africa Summit, sir.

The President. You're not that pent up. I've been giving you questions lately.

On Brennan and the CIA, the RDI report has been transmitted, the declassified version that will be released at the pleasure of the Senate committee.

I have full confidence in John Brennan. I think he has acknowledged and directly apologized to Senator Feinstein that CIA personnel did not properly handle an investigation as to how certain documents that were not authorized to be released to the Senate staff got somehow into the hands of the Senate staff. And it's clear from the IG report that some very poor judgment was shown in terms of how that was handled. Keep in mind, though, that John Brennan was the person who called for the IG report, and he's already stood up a Task Force to make sure that lessons are learned and mistakes are resolved.

With respect to the larger point of the RDI report itself, even before I came into office, I was very clear that in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, we did some things that were wrong. We did a whole lot of things that were right, but we tortured some folks. We did some things that were contrary to our values.

I understand why it happened. I think it's important when we look back to recall how afraid people were after the Twin Towers fell and the Pentagon had been hit and the plane in Pennsylvania had fallen, and people did not know whether more attacks were imminent, and there was enormous pressure on our law enforcement and our national security teams to try to deal with this. And it's important for us not to feel too sanctimonious in retrospect about the tough job that those folks had. And a lot of those folks were working hard under enormous pressure and are real patriots.

But having said all that, we did some things that were wrong. And that's what that report reflects. And that's the reason why, after I took office, one of the first things I did was to ban some of the extraordinary interrogation techniques that are the subject of that report.

And my hope is, is that this report reminds us once again that the character of our country has to be measured in part not by what we do when things are easy, but what we do when things are hard. And when we engaged in some of these enhanced interrogation techniques, techniques that I believe and I think any fair-minded person would believe were torture, we crossed a line. And that needs to be understood and accepted. And we have to, as a country, take responsibility for that so that, hopefully, we don't do it again in the future.

U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit/Ebola Outbreak in Africa

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Now, hey, hey—I gave you a question.

Q. All right.

Q. The economics of the U.S.-Africa Summit——

The President. We've got a U.S.-Africa Summit coming up next week. It is going to be an unprecedented gathering of African leaders. The importance of this for America needs to be understood. Africa is one of the fastest growing continents in the world. You've got 6 of the 10 fastest growing economies in Africa. You have all sorts of other countries like China and Brazil and India deeply interested in working with Africa, not to extract natural resources alone, which traditionally has been the relationship between Africa and the rest of the world, but now because Africa is growing and you've got thriving markets and you've got entrepreneurs and extraordinary talent among the people there.

And Africa also happens to be one of the continents where America is most popular and people feel a real affinity for our way of life. And we've made enormous progress over the last several years in not just providing traditional aid to Africa, helping countries that are suffering from malnutrition or helping countries that are suffering from AIDS, but rather, partnering and thinking about how can we trade more and how can we do business to-

gether. And that's the kind of relationship that Africa is looking for.

And I've had conversations over the last several months with U.S. businesses—some of the biggest U.S. businesses in the world—and they say, Africa, that's one of our top priorities, we want to do business with those folks, and we think that we can create U.S. jobs and send U.S. exports to Africa. But we've got to be engaged, and so this gives us a chance to do that. It also gives us a chance to talk to Africa about security issues, because, as we've seen, terrorist networks try to find places where governance is weak and security structures are weak. And if we want to keep our safes—keep ourselves safe over the long term, then one of the things that we can do is make sure that we are partnering with some countries that really have pretty effective security forces and have been deploying themselves in peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts in Africa. And that, ultimately, can save us and our troops and our military a lot of money if we've got strong partners who are able to deal with conflicts in these regions.

So it's going to be a terrific conference. I won't lie to you, traffic will be bad here in Washington. [*Laughter*] I know that everybody has been warned about that, but we are really looking forward to this, and I think it's going to be a great success.

Now, last thing I'm going to say about this, because I know that it's been on people's minds, is the issue of Ebola. This is something that we take very seriously. As soon as there's an outbreak anywhere in the world of any disease that could have significant effects, the CDC is in communication with the World Health Organization and other multilateral agencies to try to make sure that we've got an appropriate response.

This has been a more aggressive Ebola outbreak than we've seen in the past. But keep in mind that it is still affecting parts of three countries, and we've got some 50 countries represented at this summit. We are doing two things with respect to the summit itself. We're taking the appropriate precautions. Folks who are coming from these countries that have even a marginal risk or an infinitesimal risk of having been exposed in some fashion, we're making sure we're doing screening on that end, as they leave the country. We'll do additional screening when they're here. We feel confident that the procedures that we've put in place are appropriate.

More broadly, the CDC and our various health agencies are going to be working very intently with the World Health Organization and some of our partner countries to make sure that we can surge some resources down there and organization to these countries that are pretty poor and don't have a strong public health infrastructure so that we can start containing the problem.

Keep in mind that Ebola is not something that is easily transmitted. That's why, generally, outbreaks dissipate. But the key is identifying, quarantining, isolating those who contract it and making sure that practices are in place that avoid transmission. And it can be done, but it's got to be done in an organized, systematic way, and that means that we're going to have to help these countries accomplish that.

All right? Okay.

Q. Happy Birthday, Mr. President.

The President. There you go, April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks]. [*Laughter*] That's what I was talking about. Somebody finally wished me happy birthday, although it isn't until Monday, you're right. You're right.

Thank you so much. All right, guys.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:45 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to U.S. Ambassador to Russia John F. Tefft; U.S. Ambassador-designate to Sierra Leone John Hoover; and U.S. Ambassador-designate to Guatemala Todd D. Robinson; Maj. Benaya Sarel and S. Sgt. Liel Gidoni, Israeli Defense Forces, who were killed on August 1; 2d Lt. Hadar Goldin, Israeli Defense Forces, who was abducted by Hamas militants on August 1; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. He also referred to H.R. 3230 and H.R. 5021; and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

The President's Weekly Address
August 2, 2014

Hi, everybody. My top priority as President is doing everything I can to create more jobs and more opportunities for hard-working families to get ahead.

On Friday, we learned that our economy created over 200,000 new jobs in July. That's on top of about 300,000 new jobs in June. We're now in a 6-month streak with at least 200,000 new jobs each month. That hasn't happened since 1997. All told, our businesses have created 9.9 million jobs over the past 53 months. And that's the longest streak of private sector job creation in our history.

Because of you—because of your hard work and determination—America has recovered faster and come farther than almost any other advanced country on Earth. The economy is clearly getting stronger. Things are clearly getting better. And the decisions we make now can keep things moving in that direction.

That's what's at stake right now: making sure our economy works for every working American, making sure that people who work hard can get ahead. That's why I've been pushing for commonsense ideas like rebuilding our infrastructure in a way that supports millions of good jobs and helps our businesses compete. That's why I've been pushing to raise the minimum wage; to make it easier for working folks to pay off their student loans. That's why I've been pushing for fair pay and paid leave.

These policies have two things in common. All of them would help working families feel more stable and secure. And unfortunately, all of them have been blocked or ignored by Republicans in Congress.

And that's why my administration keeps taking what actions we can on our own to help working families, because Congress is doing so little for working families. House Republicans actually got together this week and voted to sue me for taking actions on my own. And then they left town for the month without settling a bunch of unfinished business that matters to working families across America.

The bottom line is this. We've come a long way these past 5½ years. Our challenges are nowhere near as daunting as they were back then. But imagine how much farther along our economy would be—how much stronger our country would be—if Congress would just do its job.

I'll never stop trying to work with both parties to get things moving faster for the middle class and everybody who's working to get into the middle class. And I could use your help. If you see your Member of Congress around home this month, tell him or her what's on your mind. Ask them why they haven't passed bills to raise the minimum wage or help with student loans or enact fair pay for women.

And when they return from vacation next month, instead of trying to pass partisan bills on party lines, hopefully, we can come together with the sense of common purpose that you expect. And in the meantime, I will not stop and will never stop doing whatever I can, whenever I can, not only to make sure that our economy succeeds, but that folks like you succeed.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:15 p.m. on August 1 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on August 2. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 1, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 2.

Statement on the Death of Former White House Press Secretary James S. Brady
August 4, 2014

Michelle and I send our deepest condolences to the family of former White House Press Secretary James Brady on his passing. Jim is a legend at the White House for his warmth and

professionalism as Press Secretary for President Reagan, for the strength he brought to bear in recovering from the shooting that nearly killed him 33 years ago, and for turning the events of that terrible afternoon into a remarkable legacy of service through the Brady Campaign To Prevent Gun Violence. Since 1993, the law that bears Jim's name has kept guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals. An untold number of people are alive today who otherwise wouldn't be, thanks to Jim.

Every day, reporters and White House staffers walk past a plaque marking the day in 2000 that the White House Briefing Room was renamed the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room. It reads, "May his courage and dedication continue to inspire all who work in this room and beyond." Those words will endure, as will his legacy. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jim's wife Sarah, who has been Jim's steadfast partner in advocacy, and their children Scott and Melissa.

Memorandum on Establishing a Comprehensive Approach to Expanding Sub-Saharan Africa's Capacity for Trade and Investment

August 4, 2014

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Establishing a Comprehensive Approach to Expanding Sub-Saharan Africa's Capacity for Trade and Investment

In June 2012, I released the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa (Strategy) outlining a comprehensive U.S. policy for the region. The Strategy builds on many of the initiatives launched during my Administration, and in particular highlights an effort critical to the future of Sub-Saharan Africa: boosting broad-based economic growth, including through trade and investment. The Strategy outlines a number of actions to help accelerate inclusive economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, including: promoting an environment that enables trade and investment; improving economic governance; promoting regional integration; expanding Sub-Saharan African capacity to effectively access and benefit from global markets; and encouraging U.S. companies to trade with and invest in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is a cornerstone of the trade relationship between the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa. Since AGOA went into effect 14 years ago, exports from Sub-Saharan Africa to the United States have more than doubled and non-oil and non-mineral exports in particular have increased nearly fourfold. The growth of new export industries has supported the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, my Administration's recent review of AGOA has revealed that, while the tariff preferences provided under AGOA are important, they alone are not sufficient to promote transformational growth in trade and investment. For beneficiary countries to be able to utilize AGOA to its fullest, this program must be linked to a comprehensive, coordinated trade and investment capacity-building approach with clearly stated goals and benchmarks.

In July 2013, I announced the launch of Trade Africa, an initiative to encourage greater regional integration and to increase trade and investment between the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa by aligning U.S. assistance with governmental and private sector engagements. Trade Africa initially focused on the East African Community, with the intention of expanding over time within Sub-Saharan Africa.

Targeted and strategic trade and investment capacity building is critical to achieving not only the goals of AGOA and Trade Africa, but also other U.S. trade and investment initiatives, such as the Doing Business in Africa Campaign and the National Export Initiative/NEXT.

Executive departments and agencies (agencies) have made major strides in advancing the trade and investment related goals of the Strategy. In order to achieve maximum effectiveness,

however, it is important to align agencies' efforts and resources through a coordinated approach that is data-driven, goal-oriented, and strategic, and that builds on the experience of U.S. Government initiatives such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Millennium Challenge Account, Feed the Future, Power Africa, and Partnership for Growth.

Section 1. Policy. It shall be the policy of the United States to spur trade and investment with and within Sub-Saharan Africa through a coordinated approach involving U.S. Government engagement, assistance programs, and partnerships with the private sector.

Sec. 2. Steering Group. There is established a Steering Group on Africa Trade and Investment Capacity Building (Steering Group), to be chaired by the Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economics or her designee from the National Security Council staff. The Steering Group shall meet regularly.

Sec. 3. Membership. The Steering Group shall include designated representatives from:

(a) the Department of State;

(b) the Department of the Treasury;

(c) the Department of Agriculture;

(d) the Department of Commerce;

(e) the Department of Transportation;

(f) the Department of Energy;

(g) the Department of Homeland Security;

(h) the Overseas Private Investment Corporation;

(i) the Millennium Challenge Corporation;

(j) the United States Agency for International Development;

(k) the United States Trade and Development Agency;

(l) the Export-Import Bank of the United States;

(m) the Office of the United States Trade Representative;

(n) the Office of Management and Budget;

(o) the African Development Foundation;

(p) the Small Business Administration;

(q) the Council of Economic Advisers; and

(r) such agencies and offices as the Chair may, from time to time, designate.

Sec. 4. Functions. Consistent with the authorities and responsibilities of its member agencies and offices, the Steering Group shall perform the following functions:

(a) Not later than 180 days after the date of this memorandum, the Steering Group shall report to the President, through the National Security Advisor, recommendations on a comprehensive approach to expanding Sub-Saharan Africa's capacity for trade and investment, consistent with U.S. trade and investment policy, development policy, and international agreements. The recommendations shall include:

(i) clearly defined goals and benchmarks for increasing trade and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa, and appropriate and transparent criteria for identifying priority countries, regions, and sectors that have the greatest potential to contribute toward meeting these goals and benchmarks;

(ii) an indication of how the recommendations complement other major U.S. Government initiatives and partnerships focused on related issues;

(iii) an outline of how to utilize programs across agencies to achieve these goals;

(iv) an assessment of how the recommendations complement the activities of other major development partners, including Sub-Saharan African countries;

(v) an explanation of how the recommendations fit within existing budget constraints and resource requests, with identification of any significant funding gaps; and

(vi) clearly articulated roles and responsibilities of relevant agencies.

(b) In undertaking these efforts, the Steering Group shall:

(i) consider a broad range of potential trade and investment capacity building, including: activities that support AGOA utilization; trade-related efforts to enhance regional integration; programs to develop supply chains; support for development of hard and soft infrastructure; and activities to foster a non-discriminatory environment that enables trade and

investment. Such activities include regulatory reform and transparency, trade facilitation and better border operations (including implementation of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement), and implementation of World Trade Organization commitments (including those that relate to science-based sanitary and phytosanitary measures and other technical standards);

(ii) take into account the range of supply-side constraints to trade in Sub-Saharan Africa, growing private sector interest in trade with and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa, U.S. trade policies and interests (including in addressing barriers to U.S. trade and investment), international obligations, and the best means to promote regional integration and support value-added production;

(iii) consult stakeholders, including Sub-Saharan African partner governments, regional economic communities, partner donor countries, the private sector, development banks, non-governmental organizations, and others as appropriate;

(iv) coordinate its efforts with the interagency Trade Policy Committee, which was authorized by section 242 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, as amended, and established by Executive Order 11846 of March 27, 1975, and the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee, which was authorized by statute in 1992 (15 U.S.C. 4727) and established by Executive Order 12870 of September 30, 1993; and

(v) coordinate its efforts with other U.S. Government initiatives focused on related issues, including Power Africa, Feed the Future, the Doing Business in Africa Campaign, Partnership for Growth, and the Young African Leaders Initiative, to ensure that U.S. assistance supports consistent policies across initiatives.

Sec. 5. General Provisions. (a) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law, and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(b) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department, agency, or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(c) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

BARACK OBAMA

Letter to Congressional Leaders Regarding Designation of Emergency Funding Under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as Amended

August 4, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I hereby designate as an emergency requirement all funding so designated by the Congress in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Resolution, 2014, pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, for the following account: "Department of Defense—Procurement—Procurement, Defense-Wide."

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at the United States-Africa Business Forum

August 5, 2014

The President. Well, good afternoon, everybody. To Mayor Bloomberg, thank you, not only for the kind introduction, but to Bloomberg Philanthropies as our cohost, and for the great work that you're doing across Africa to help create jobs and promote public health, encourage entrepreneurship, especially women. So thank you very much, Michael, for your leadership. I want to thank our other cohost, my great friend and tireless Commerce Secretary, Penny Pritzker.

I want to welcome all of our partners who are joining us from across Africa—heads of state and government—and let me welcome the delegations from Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea, with whom we are working so urgently to control the Ebola outbreak and whose citizens are in our thoughts and prayers today. I also want to welcome Madam Chairperson Dlamini-Zuma of the African Union Commission; President of the African Development Bank, Donald Kaberuka; as well as the President of the World Bank, Dr. Jim Kim. Please give them all a round of applause.

And I want to acknowledge Members of Congress who are here and who are such great champions of Africa's engagement with—America's engagement with Africa. In a city that does not always agree on much these days, there is broad bipartisan agreement that a secure, prosperous, and self-reliant Africa is in the national interests of the United States.

And most of all, I want to thank all of you: the business leaders, the entrepreneurs both from the United States and from across Africa who are creating jobs and opportunity for our people every single day. And I want to acknowledge my leaders from across my administration who, like Penny, are your partners, including our U.S. Trade Representative, Mike Froman; USAID Administrator Raj Shah; and our new head of the Millennial Challenge Corporation, Dana Hyde; President of the Export-Import Bank, Fred Hochberg; Director of the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, Lee Zak; and our President and CEO of OPIC, Elizabeth Littlefield.

So we are here, of course, as part of the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, the largest gathering any American President has ever hosted with African heads of state and government. And this summit reflects a perspective that has guided my approach to Africa as President. Even as Africa continues to face enormous challenges, even as too many Africans still endure poverty and conflict, hunger and disease, even as we work together to meet those challenges, we cannot lose sight of the new Africa that's emerging.

We all know what makes Africa such an extraordinary opportunity: some of the fastest growing economies in the world, a growing middle class, expanding sectors like manufacturing and retail, one of the fastest growing telecommunications markets in the world. More governments are reforming, attracting a record level of foreign investment. It is the youngest and fastest growing continent, with young people that are full of dreams and ambition.

Last year in South Africa, in Soweto, I held a town hall with young men and women from across the continent, including some who joined us by video from Uganda. And one young Ugandan woman spoke for many Africans when she said to me: "We are looking to the world for equal business partners and commitments and not necessarily aid. We want to do [business] at home and be the ones to own our own markets." That's a sentiment we hear over and over again. When I was traveling throughout Africa last year, what I heard was

the desire of Africans not just for aid, but for trade and development that actually helps nations grow and empowers Africans for the long term.

As President, I've made it clear that the United States is determined to be a partner in Africa's success—a good partner, an equal partner, and a partner for the long term. We don't look to Africa simply for its natural resources; we recognize Africa for its greatest resource, which is its people and its talents and their potential. We don't simply want to extract minerals from the ground for our growth, we want to build genuine partnerships that create jobs and opportunity for all our peoples and that unleash the next era of African growth. That's the kind of partnership America offers.

And since I took office, we've stepped up our efforts across the board: more investments in Africa; more trade missions, like the one Penny led this year; and more support for U.S. exports. And I'm proud that American exports to Africa have grown to record levels, supporting jobs in Africa and the United States, including a quarter of a million good American jobs.

But here's the thing: The—our entire trade with all of Africa is still only about equal to our trade with Brazil, one country. Of all the goods we export to the world, only about 1 percent goes to sub-Saharan Africa. So we've got a lot of work to do. We have to do better, much better. I want Africans buying more American products. I want Americans buying more African products. I know you do too. And that's what you're doing here today.

So I'm pleased that in conjunction with this forum, American companies are announcing major new deals in Africa. Blackstone will invest in African energy projects. Coca-Cola will partner with Africa to bring clean water to its communities. GE will help build African infrastructure. Marriott will build more hotels. All told, American companies—many with our trade assistance—are announcing new deals in clean energy, aviation, banking, and construction worth more than $14 billion, spurring development across Africa and selling more goods stamped with that proud label, "Made in America."

And I don't want to just sustain this momentum, I want to up it. I want to up our game. So today I'm announcing a series of steps to take our trade with Africa to the next level.

First, we're going to keep working to renew the African Growth and Opportunity Act and enhance it. We still do the vast majority of our trade with just three countries: South Africa, Nigeria, and Angola. It's still heavily weighted towards the energy sector. We need more Africans, including women and small and medium-sized businesses, getting their goods to market. And leaders in Congress—Democrats and Republicans—have said they want to move forward. So I'm optimistic we can work with Congress to renew and modernize AGOA before it expires, renew it for the long term. We need to get that done.

Second, as part of our "Doing Business in Africa" campaign, we're going to do even more to help American companies compete. We'll put even more of our teams on the ground, advocating on behalf of your companies. We're going to send even more trade missions. Today we're announcing $7 billion in new financing to promote American exports to Africa. Earlier today I signed an Executive order to create a new President's Advisory Council of business leaders to help make sure we're doing every single thing we can to help you do business in Africa.

And I would be remiss if I did not add that House Republicans can help by reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank. That is the right thing to do. I was trying to explain to somebody that if I've got a Ford dealership and the Toyota dealership is providing financing to anybody who walks in the dealership and I'm not, I'm going to lose business. It's pretty straightforward. We need to get that reauthorized. And you business leaders can help make clear that it is critical to U.S. business.

Number three, we want to partner with Africa to build the infrastructure that economies need to flourish. And that starts with electricity, which most Africans still lack. And that's why last year while traveling throughout the

continent, I announced a bold initiative, Power Africa, to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa and help bring electricity to more than 20 million African homes and businesses.

Now, we've joined with African governments, the African Development Bank, and the private sector, and I will tell you, the response has exceeded our projections. It has been overwhelming. Already, projects and negotiations are underway that, when completed, will put us nearly 80 percent of the way toward our goal. On top of the significant resources we've already committed, I'm announcing that the United States will increase our pledge to $300 million a year for this effort.

And as of today, including an additional $12 billion in new commitments being announced this week by our private sector partners and the World Bank and the Government of Sweden, we've now mobilized a total of more than $26 billion to Power Africa just since we announced it—$26 billion. So today we're raising the bar. We decided, we're meeting our goal too easily, Zuma, so we've got to go up. So we're tripling our goal, aiming to bring electricity to more than 60 million African homes and businesses that can spark growth for decades to come.

Fourth, we'll do more to help Africans trade with each other, because the markets with the greatest potential are often the countries right next door. And it should not be harder to export your goods to your neighbor than it is to export those goods to Los Angeles or to Amsterdam. So, through our Trade Africa initiative, we'll increase our investments to help our African partners build their own capacity to trade, to strengthen regional markets, make borders more efficient, modernize the customs system. We want to get African goods moving faster within Africa, as well as outside of Africa.

And finally, we're doing more to empower the next generation of African entrepreneurs and business leaders, its young men and women, like our extraordinary Mandela Washington Fellows that I met with last week. And I have to say to the heads of state and government, you would have been extraordinarily proud to meet these young people who exhibit so much talent and so much energy and so much drive.

With new regional leadership centers and online courses, we're going to offer training and networking for tens of thousands of young entrepreneurs across Africa. New grants will help them access the capital they need to grow. Our annual Global Entrepreneurship Summit this year will be held in Morocco. Next year, it will be held for the first time in sub-Saharan Africa, because we want to make sure that all that talent is tapped and they have access to the capital and the networks and the markets that they need to succeed. Because if they succeed, then the countries in which they live will succeed. They'll create jobs. They'll create growth. They'll create opportunity.

So the bottom line is, the United States is making a major and long-term investment in Africa's progress. And taken together, the new commitments I've described today—across our Government and by our many partners—total some $33 billion. And that will support development across Africa and jobs here in the United States; up to tens of thousands of American jobs are supported every time we expand trade with Africa.

As critical as all these investments are, the key to unlocking the next era of African growth is not going to be here in the United States, it's going to be in Africa. And so, during this week's summit, we'll be discussing a whole range of areas where we're going to have to work together, areas that are important in their own right, but which are also essential to Africa's growth.

Capital is one thing. Development programs and projects are one thing. But rule of law, regulatory reform, good governance—those things matter even more, because people should be able to start a business and ship their goods without having to pay a bribe or hire somebody's cousin.

Agricultural development is critical because it's the best way to boost incomes for the majority of Africans who are farmers, especially as they deal with the impacts of climate change.

Rebuilding a strong health infrastructure, especially for mothers and children, is critical

because no country can prosper unless its citizens are healthy and strong and children are starting off with the advantages they need to grow to their full potential.

And we're going to have to talk about security and peace, because the future belongs to those who build, not those who destroy. And it's very hard to attract business investment and it's very hard to build infrastructure and it's very hard to sustain entrepreneurship in the midst of conflict.

So I just want to close with one example of what trade can help us build together. Kusum Kavia was born in Kenya; her family was originally from India. Eventually, she emigrated to the United States and along with her husband started a small business in California. It started off as a small engineering firm. Then, it started manufacturing small power generators. With the help of Export-Import Bank, including seminars and a line of credit and risk insurance, they started exporting power generators to West Africa. In Benin, they helped build a new electric power plant.

And it's ended up being a win-win for everybody. It's been a win for their company, Combustion Associates, because exports to Africa have boosted their sales, which means they've been able to hire more workers here in the United States. They partner with GE; GE is doing well. Most of their revenues are from exports to Africa. It's been a win for their suppliers in Texas and Ohio and New York. It's been a win for Benin and its people, because more electricity for families and businesses, jobs for Africans at the power plant because the company hires locally and trains those workers. And they hope to keep expanding as part of our Power Africa initiative.

So this is an example of just one small business. Imagine if we can replicate that success across our countries.

Kusum says, "When our customers see the label, 'Made in America,' when they see our flag, it puts us above all of the competition." And her vision for their company is the same vision that brings us all here today. She says, "We really want to have a long-term partnership with Africa." So Kusum is here. I had a chance to meet her backstage. She's—where is she? Right there. Stand up, Kusum. The—so she's doing great work. Thank you so much.

But she's an example of what's possible: a long-term partnership with Africa. And that's what America offers. That's what we're building. That's the difference we can make when Africans and Americans work together. So let's follow Kusum's lead. Let's do even more business together. Let's tear down barriers that slow us down and get in the way of trade. Let's build up the infrastructure—the roads, the bridges, the ports, the electricity—that connect our countries. Let's create more and sell more and buy more from each other. I'm confident that we can. And when we do, we won't just propel the next era of African growth, we'll create more jobs and opportunity for everybody: for people here in the United States and for people around the world.

So thank you very much, everybody, for what so far has been an outstanding session. And I've got the opportunity to speak to this young man.

[*At this point, the President was joined onstage by NeoLab Technology Cofounder Takunda Ralph Michael Chingonzo of Zimbabwe for an interview.*]

Mr. Chingonzo. So thank you very much, Mr. President, for this opportunity. I'll start by wishing you a belated happy birthday.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Chingonzo. Thank you very much. [*Laughter*]

The President. Have you introduced yourself to everybody?

Mr. Chingonzo. I wanted to really jump into the issues. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, go ahead and introduce yourself. Come on, you——

Mr. Chingonzo. All right. So anyway, I'm Takunda Chingonzo. I'm a young entrepreneur. I'm 21. I'm from Zimbabwe. And I'm working in the wireless technology space. We're essentially liberating the Internet for Zimbabweans, so—[*applause*].

The President. And let me just—this is an example of our young African leaders; in fact,

this is the youngest young African leader. But one thing I will say, though, if you're going to promote your business, you've got to make sure to let people know. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Chingonzo. Definitely, definitely.

The President. Just a little tip.

Mr. Chingonzo. Definitely.

The President. You can't be shy, man. [*Laughter*] Please, go ahead.

U.S. Sanctions Against Zimbabwe

Mr. Chingonzo. That's correct, Mr. President. [*Laughter*] So I was really going to start by delving into a personal experience. I was going to get to my business and how I got to where we are.

So, as I was saying, we're working in the technology space. I'm working on my third startup. It's called Saisai. We're creating Zimbabwe's first free Internet-access network, hence liberating the Internet. So, in our working, we came to a point in time where we needed to import a bit of technology from the United States, and so we were engaging in conversation with these U.S.-based businesses. And the response that we got, time and time again, was that, unfortunately, we cannot do business with you because you are from Zimbabwe. And I was shocked. This doesn't make sense.

And so this is the exact same experience that other entrepreneurs that are in Zimbabwe have gone through, even through the meetings that I've had here. You know, you sit down with potential investors, you talk about the project, the outlook, the opportunity, the growth, and all that, and they're excited, you can see. All systems are firing, right? And then, I say I'm from Zimbabwe, and they look at me, and they say, young man, this is a good project, very good, very good, but unfortunately, we cannot engage in business with you.

And I understand that the sanctions that we have in Zimbabwe—that are imposed on entities in Zimbabwe, these are targeted sanctions, right? But then, we have come to a point in time where we as young Africans are failing to properly engage in business with U.S.-based entities because there hasn't been that clarity. These entities believe that Zimbabwe is under sanctions. So what really can we do to do try and clarify this to make sure that we as the young entrepreneurs can effectively develop Africa and engage in business?

The President. Well, obviously, the situation in Zimbabwe is somewhat unique. The challenge for us in the United States has been, how do we balance our desire to help the people of Zimbabwe with what has, frankly, been a repeated violation of basic democratic practices and human rights inside of Zimbabwe?

And we think it is very important to send clear signals about how we expect elections to be conducted, governments to be conducted, because if we don't, then all too often, with impunity, the people of those countries can suffer. But you're absolutely right that it also has to be balanced with making sure that whatever structures that we put in place with respect to sanctions don't end up punishing the very people inside those countries.

My immediate suggestion—and this is a broader point to all the African businesses who are here, as well as the U.S. businesses—is to make sure that we're using the Department of Commerce and the other U.S. agencies where we can gather groups of entrepreneurs and find out exactly what can be done, what can't be done, what resources are available. It may be that you and a group of entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe are able to meet with us and propose certain projects that allow us to say this is something that will advance as opposed to retard the progress for the Zimbabwean people.

So what I'd suggest would be that we set up a meeting, and we find out what kinds of things that the young entrepreneurs of Zimbabwe want to do and see if there are ways that we can work with you consistent with the strong message that we send about good governance in Zimbabwe.

Mr. Chingonzo. I see. Because really—the point of emphasis really is that as young Africans, we want to converse with other business entities here in the U.S., and if these sanctions are really targeted, then in honest truth, they aren't supposed to hamper the business that we're trying to engage in, the development that we're talking about.

The President. Well, let's see if we can refine them further based on some of the things you're talking about.

U.S. Private Sector Investment in African Businesses/Feed the Future Program

Mr. Chingonzo. No, that's all right. Now, there have been a good number of investments that have been announced here—multibillion-dollar investments in Africa—and we're really excited. And there's been a lot of talk about how the public and private partnerships are the vehicle through which this investment will come into Africa, but I really want to bring it to a point of clarity. I believe that the private sector is stratified in itself. We have the existing indigenous businesses in these countries that you're hoping to invest in, and this is where usually the funding comes through, the partnerships and all that. And that is well and fine.

But then, underneath that, we have these young, upcoming entrepreneurs, the innovators, those that come up with products and services that disrupt the industry. And this is the innovation that we want in Africa, to build products by Africans for Africans. But in most cases, in what we have seen over the past years, is that, indeed, this investment comes through, but it never cascades down to these younger entrepreneurs, the emerging businesses. And so the existing businesses then form a sort of ceiling which we cannot break through.

The President. Right.

Mr. Chingonzo. When it comes to investment, when you're talking about solving unemployment, I would believe that it's more realistic to assume and understand that the probability of 10 startups employing 10 people in a given time period, it's more realistic than one indigenous company employing 100 people.

So what really has been—or rather, has there been any consideration in these deals that have been structured in the investments that you announced to cater for the young entrepreneur who is trying to innovate to solve the problems in society?

The President. Well, first of all, I think for the business leaders who are here, both African and U.S., it's hard being a startup everywhere.

Mr. Chingonzo. That's true.

The President. Because part of what you're describing is typical of business around the world: Folks who are already in, they don't necessarily want to share. They don't want to be disrupted. [*Laughter*] If there's a good opportunity, they'd rather do it themselves. If they see a small up-and-coming hotshot who might disrupt their business, they may initially try to block you or they may try to buy you out or—and getting financing for a startup is always going to be difficult. You hear that from entrepreneurs here in the U.S. as well.

Mr. Chingonzo. Sure.

The President. Having said that, what is absolutely true is that as we think about the billions of dollars that we're mobilizing, we want to make sure that small businesses, medium-sized businesses, women-owned businesses, that they have opportunity. And so my instructions to all of our agencies and, hopefully, the work that we're doing with all of our partners is how can we identify, target financing for the startup; how can we identify and link up U.S. companies with small and medium-sized businesses and not just the large businesses? And I think you are absolutely right that by us trying to spread investment, not narrowly through one or two companies, but more broadly, that the opportunities for success in those countries are higher, and it also creates a healthy competition.

And that's true also in terms of how we're designing, for example, our Feed the Future program, which is working with almost 2 million small farmers inside of Africa. When I was in Senegal, I met with a woman, maybe in her thirties; she had a small plot of land initially. Through the Feed the Future program, she had been able to mechanize, double her productivity. By doubling her productivity and, through a smartphone, getting better prices to the market, she was able to increase her profits. Then, she bought a tractor. Then, she doubled her productivity again. And suddenly, what had started off as just a program to increase her income had become capital for a

growing business where she was now hiring people in her area and doing some of the processing of the grain that she grew herself so that she could move up the value chain.

There are entrepreneurs like that all across Africa. Sometimes, the capital they need is not very large. Sometimes, it's a fairly modest amount.

Mr. Chingonzo. That's very true, that's very true.

The President. And so what I want to do is to make sure that we are constantly looking out for opportunities to disburse this capital not just narrowly, but broadly. And one of the things that I hope happens with U.S. companies is, is that they're constantly looking for opportunities to partner with young entrepreneurs, startups, and not just always going to the same well-established businesses.

Now, there are going to be some large-capital projects where you've got a good, solid, established company. Hopefully, they, themselves, have policies with respect to their suppliers that allow them to start encouraging and growing small businesses as well.

Government Restrictions on Internet Access/Rule of Law in African Nations

Mr. Chingonzo. Exactly. And on that note, I'm glad that you acknowledged that, and I hope that even in these deals, in the investments that you're talking about, that one of the conditions be that those large organizations that are getting investment have policies that cascade downwards to people at the grassroots.

You spoke about this lady who was using a smartphone to—it is one key issue that is really propelling business and development in Africa, the ability to leverage technology. And really, it is all about the Internet of things. And that is why I'm personally working in liberating the Internet to get more people connected.

Now, there is—and this is a huge opportunity in Africa as well. Now, there is this troubling issue, rather, that has been brought to our attention with entities and organizations that have come up and that have said, we want to control the Internet, we want to see who gets what traffic and from whom. And see, policies and activities like that become challenges for startups that are trying to leverage the Internet, for this lady, this farmer that you talked about who is trying to leverage and get information from the Internet.

So I want to try to understand what is your stance on net neutrality and its effects in the growth and development in Africa?

The President. Well, this is an important issue for all the heads of state and government, not just in Africa, but around the world. The reason the Internet is so powerful is because it's open. My daughters, 16 and 13, they can access information from anyplace in the world. They can learn about a particular discipline instantaneously, in ways that, when I was their age—first of all, I wasn't as motivated as they are. I was lazier than that. They do much better in school than I did. But the world is at their fingertips.

And what facilitates that, and what has facilitated the incredible value that's been built by companies like Google and Facebook and so many others, all the applications that you find on your smartphone, is that there are not restrictions, there are not barriers to entry for new companies who have a good idea to use this platform that is open to create value. And it is very important, I think, that we maintain that.

Now, I know that there's a tension in some countries; their attitude is, we don't necessarily want all this information flowing because it can end up also being used as a tool for political organizing, it can be used for—as a tool to criticize the government, and so maybe we'd prefer a system that is more closed. I think that is a self-defeating attitude. Over the long term, because of technology, information, knowledge, transparency is inevitable. And that's true here in the United States; it's true everywhere.

And so what we should be doing is trying to maintain an open Internet, trying to keep a process whereby any talented person who has an idea can suddenly use the Internet to disperse information. There are going to be occasional tensions involved in terms of us monitoring the use of the Internet for terrorist net-

works or criminal enterprises or human trafficking. But we can do that in ways that are compatible with maintaining an open Internet.

And this raises the broader question that I had mentioned earlier, which is, Africa needs capital; in some cases, Africa needs technical assistance; Africa certainly needs access to markets. But perhaps the biggest thing that Africa is going to need to unleash the—even more the potential that's already there and the growth that's already taking place is laws and regulations and structures that empower individuals and are not simply designed to control or empower those at the very top.

And the Internet is one example. You've got to have a system and sets of laws that encourage entrepreneurship, but that's also true when it comes to a whole host of issues. It's true when it comes to how hard is it to get a business permit when a new startup like yours wants to establish itself.

When it comes to Power Africa, there is—there are billions of dollars floating around the world that are interested in investing in power generation in Africa. And the countries that are going to attract that investment are the ones where the investor knows that if a power plant is built, that there are rules in place that are transparent that ensure that they're going to get a decent return, and that some of the revenue isn't siphoned off in certain ways so that the investor has political risks or risks with respect to corruption.

The more that governments set up the right rules, understanding that in the 21st century, the power that drives growth and development and the marketplace involves knowledge, and that can't be controlled, the more successful countries are going to be.

Internet Neutrality/Internet Censorship

Mr. Chingonzo. I see. So just to clarify on the issue of the net neutrality, you are advocating for an open and fair Internet——

The President. Yes.

Mr. Chingonzo. ——which would—then it has structure to ensure that the platform itself isn't abused.

The President. Well, there are two issues—net neutrality—in the United States, one of the issues around net neutrality is whether you are creating different rates or charges for different content providers. That's the big controversy here.

Mr. Chingonzo. Yes, naturally.

The President. You have big, wealthy media companies who might be willing to pay more, but then also charge more for more spectrum, more bandwidth on the Internet so they can stream movies faster or what have you.

And I personally—the position of my administration, as well as, I think, a lot of companies here is, you don't want to start getting a differentiation in how accessible the Internet is to various users. You want to leave it open so that the next Google or the next Facebook can succeed.

Mr. Chingonzo. I see.

The President. There's another problem, though. There are other countries—and I think this is what you were alluding to—that feel comfortable with the idea of controlling and censoring Internet content in their home countries and setting up rules and laws about what can or cannot be on the Internet. And I think that that not only is going to inhibit entrepreneurs who are creating value on the Internet; I think it's also going to inhibit the growth of the country generally, because closed societies that are not open to new ideas, eventually, they fall behind. Eventually, they miss out on the future because they're so locked into trying to maintain the past.

Role of Government in Promoting Economic Development/Entrepreneurship in African Nations/Africa-U.S. Economic Cooperation

Mr. Chingonzo. I see. Thank you for the clarity. I think we're also out of a bit of time. I'll ask my final question. When we began this conversation, we were alluding to the fact that there is need to separate the political function and economic function. In other words, politics should not get in the way of business, right? And I've gone to quite a good number of—I know it's difficult. So I've gone to a good number of conferences where the end

deliverable of the entire summit, or whatever it is, is that we need to lobby government to create policies that are conducive, and this and that. And that's usually what you get—we are—either you're trying to lobby somebody to do something, right? And in turn, governments come up and say, yes, we promise to come up with this and that, and this and that. And that's a whole political sphere of things. My question is, apart from that, what can we, as business leaders, as the private sector, what can we do, sort of, independently to—what can we do to create this economic environment that fosters for the growth and development of Africa as a continent?

The President. Well, look, although this isn't always a popular position here in Washington these days, the truth is, is that government really can help set the conditions and the framework for markets to function effectively, in part because governments are able to initiate projects like roads and bridges and airports that any individual business would find cost prohibitive. It wouldn't make sense to invest in what is a collective good; it's not going to help your bottom line if everybody else is using it. Right? So that's part of the function of government.

Part of the function of government is to educate a population so that you've got a well-trained workforce. It's hard for companies to invest in doing that by themselves. There are certain common goods, like maintaining clean air and clean water and making sure that if you have capital markets, that they're well regulated so that they're trustworthy, and small investors and large investors know that if they invest in a stock, that they're not being cheated.

So there are a whole host of functions that government has to play. But in the end, what drives innovation typically is not what happens in government, it's what's happening in companies. And what we found in the United States is, is that companies, once they've got the basic rules and they've got the basic platform, they are able to create value and innovation and cultures that encourage growth. And I think that African entrepreneurs are going to be the trendsetters for determining how societies think about themselves and, ultimately, how governments think about these issues.

The truth of the matter is, is that if you have big, successful companies, or you've got widespread entrepreneurship, and you have a growing middle class, and practices have been established in terms of fair dealing and treating your workers properly and extending opportunity to smaller contractors and promoting women and making sure women are paid like men and—suddenly, what happens is, businesses create new norms and new sensibilities. And governments oftentimes will respond.

And so I think in Africa, what I'd like to see more and more of is partnerships between American businesses, between African businesses. Some of the incredible cultures of some of our U.S. businesses that do a really good job promoting people and maintaining a meritocracy and treating women equally and treating people of different races and faiths and sexual orientations fairly and equally and making sure that there are typical norms of how you deal with people in contracts and respect legal constraints—all those things, I think, can then take root in a country like Zimbabwe or any other country. Hopefully, governments are encouraging that, not inhibiting that. They recognize that that's how the world as a whole is increasingly moving in that direction. And over time, you will see an Africa that is driven by individual entrepreneurs and private organizations, and governments will be responsive to their demands.

So I think the one thing I want to make sure people understand, though, is it's not an either-or issue. Government has a critical role to play. The marketplace has a critical role to play. Nonprofit organizations have a critical role to play. But the goal and the orientation constantly should be, how do we empower individuals to work together? And if we are empowering young people like you all across Africa, if we've got a 21-year-old who has already started three businesses, we've got to figure out how to invest in him, how to make it easier for him to succeed. If you succeed, you're going to then be hiring a whole bunch of people, and they, in turn, will succeed. And that's been

the recipe for growth in the 20th century and the 21st century.

And I'm confident that Africa is well on its way. America just wants to make sure that we're helpful in that process. And I know that all the U.S. companies who are here, that's their goal as well. We are interested in Africa, because we know that if Africa thrives and succeeds, and if you've got a bunch of entrepreneurs, they're going to need supplies from us maybe, or they may supply us with outstanding products; they're going to have a growing middle class that wants to buy iPhones or applications from us. In turn, they may provide us new services, and we can be the distributor for something that's invented in Africa, and all of us grow at the same time.

That's our goal, and I'm confident that we can make it happen. And this summit has been a great start. So I want to thank you for doing a great job moderating. I want to thank all the leaders here, not only of government, but also business for participating. There's been great energy, great enthusiasm. I know a lot of business has gotten done. If any of you are interested in investing in this young man, let him know. [*Laughter*]

All right, thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City, in his capacity as founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies; Eirene Ikomon, resident of Uganda; Kusum Kavia, cofounder and president, and Mukund Kavia, cofounder and chairman, Combustion Associates, Inc.; and Senegalese farmer Nimna Diayaté. He also referred to Executive Order 13675, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the United States-Africa Leaders Summit Dinner
August 5, 2014

Good evening, everybody. Please have a seat. On behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House. This city, this house, has welcomed foreign envoys and leaders for more than two centuries. But never before have we hosted a dinner at the White House like this, with so many Presidents, so many Prime Ministers all at once. So we are grateful for all the leaders who are in attendance. We are grateful to the spouses. I think the men will agree that the women outshine us tonight in the beautiful colors of Africa.

Tonight we are making history, and it's an honor to have all of you here.

And I stand before you as the President of the United States and a proud American. I also stand before you as the son of a man from Africa. The blood of Africa runs through our family. And so for us, the bonds between our countries, our continents, are deeply personal.

We're grateful for the ties of family. Of all the incredible moments of our trips to Africa, one of the most memorable was being able to bring Michelle, and later our little girls, to my father's hometown in Kenya, where we were embraced by so many relatives.

We've walked the steps of a painful past—in Ghana, at Cape Coast Castle; in Senegal, at Gorée Island—standing with our daughters in those doors of no return through which so many Africans passed in chains. We'll never forget bringing our daughters to Robben Island, to the cell from which Madiba showed the unconquerable strength and dignity of an African heart.

We've been inspired by Africans, ordinary Africans doing extraordinary things: farmers boosting their yields, health workers saving lives from HIV/AIDS, advocates standing up for justice and the rule of law, courageous women asserting their rights, entrepreneurs creating jobs, African peacekeepers risking their lives to save the innocent.

And both of us stand in awe of the extraordinary young Africans that we've met, not only across Africa, but, most recently, here in Washington, just last week, when we hosted our Mandela Washington Fellows from many

of your countries. And those young people show the world that Africa has the talent and the drive to forge a new future.

These are the tides of history, and the ties of family, that bring us together this week. These are the citizens who look to us to build a future worthy of their dreams, especially those who dream of giving their children a future without war or injustice, without poverty or disease. They are in our prayers tonight.

And also with us are the words of a song, "New Africa," that have inspired so many across the continent, and that Michelle and I first heard last year in Senegal:

> Come together, New Africa
> Work together
> Keep on working, for Africa

And so I propose a toast to the new Africa—the Africa that is rising and so full of promise—and to our shared task to keep on working for the peace and prosperity and justice that all our people seek and that all our people so richly deserve.

Cheers.

[*At this point, the President offered a toast.*]

Enjoy your dinner, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:02 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Nelson R. Mandela of South Africa, who died on December 5, 2013, by his clan name Madiba.

Remarks at the Opening Session of the United States-Africa Leaders Summit

August 6, 2014

Good morning, everyone. Michelle and I were honored to host you and your wonderful spouses at dinner last night. I hope people didn't stay out too late. The evening was a chance to celebrate the bonds between our peoples. And this morning we continue our work, and it's my privilege to welcome you to this first-ever U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit.

Let me also thank our Secretary of State, John Kerry, and everybody here at the State Department who's hosting us today. John and his team are doing outstanding work deepening our partnership with so many of your nations. So, John, thank you for your outstanding work.

I want to begin by welcoming President Conde of Guinea and noting that two leaders were not able to join us, President Sirleaf of Liberia and President Koroma of Sierra Leone. We are grateful for the presence of their delegations, even as these countries are focused on a very difficult situation back home. And on behalf of all of us here today, our thoughts and prayers are with those who've been affected by the Ebola outbreak, especially those who've lost loved ones.

The United States and our international partners will continue to do whatever we can to help our African partners respond to this crisis and to stand with the people of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. In their histories, they've overcome great challenges, and they are drawing on that same spirit of strength and resilience today.

So we've come together this week because, even as the continent faces significant challenges, as I said last night, I believe a new Africa is emerging. With some of the world's fastest growing economies, a growing middle class, and the youngest and fastest growing population on Earth, Africa will help shape the world as never before.

Moreover, Africa's progress is being led by Africans, including leaders represented here today. More governments are embracing economic reforms, attracting record levels of investment. Gains in development, increasing agricultural production, declining rates of infectious diseases are being driven by African plans. African security forces and African peacekeepers are risking their lives to meet re-

gional threats. A new generation of young Africans is making its voice heard.

Africa's rise means opportunity for all of us, including the opportunity to transform the relationship between the United States and Africa. As I said in Cape Town last year, it's time for a new model of partnership between America and Africa: a partnership of equals that focuses on African capacity to solve problems and on Africa's capacity to grow. And that's why we're here.

And to my fellow leaders, I want to thank you and your teams for helping us to shape our agenda today. Our work can build on the valuable contributions already made this week by civil society groups, the private sector, young Africans, and—at our first session of this summit—our faith communities, which do so much to sustain the U.S.-Africa relationship. Different though they may be, our faith traditions remind us of the inherent dignity of every human being and that our work as nations must be rooted in empathy and compassion for each other, as brothers and as sisters.

Now, today is an opportunity to focus on three broad areas where we can make progress together.

Number one, we have the opportunity to expand trade that creates jobs. The new trade deals and investments I announced yesterday are an important step. And today we can focus on what we can do, as governments, to accelerate that of investment: economic and regulatory reforms, regional integration, and development so that growth is broad based, especially among women, who must be empowered for economies to truly flourish.

Second, we have the opportunity to strengthen the governance upon which economic growth and free societies depend. Today we can focus on the ingredients of progress: rule of law, open government, accountable and transparent institutions, strong civil societies, and respect for the universal human rights of all people.

And finally, we have the opportunity to deepen our security cooperation against common threats. As I said, African security forces and African peacekeepers are in the lead across the continent. As your partner, the United States is proud to support these efforts. And today we can focus on how we can continue to strengthen Africa's capacity to meet transitional threats—transnational threats and, in so doing, make all of our nations more secure.

So, in short, we are here not just to talk. We are here to take action: concrete steps to build on Africa's progress and forge the partnerships of equals that we seek; tangible steps to deliver more prosperity, more security, and more justice to our citizens. So to my fellow leaders, again, thank you so much for being here. I look forward to our work together today.

And at this point, I want to invite President Aziz of Mauritania, the current Chairman of the African Union, to say a few words.

President Aziz.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:17 a.m. at the Department of State.

The President's News Conference
August 6, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated. As I think everyone knows by now, this first U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit has been the largest gathering we've ever hosted with African heads of state and government, and that includes about 50 motorcades. So I want to begin by thanking the people of Washington, DC, for helping us host this historic event and especially for their patience with the traffic.

As I've said, this summit reflects the reality that even as Africa continues to face great challenges, we're also seeing the emergence of a new, more prosperous Africa. Africa's progress is being led by Africans, including leaders here today. I want to take this opportunity again to thank my fellow leaders for being here. Rather than a lot of prepared speeches, our sessions today were genuine discussions, a chance to truly listen and to try to come together around

some pragmatic steps that we can take together. And that's what we've done this week.

First, we made important progress in expanding our trade. The $33 billion in new trade and investments that I announced yesterday will help spur African development and support tens of thousands of American jobs. With major new commitments to our Power Africa initiative, we've tripled our goal and now aim to bring electricity to 60 million African homes and businesses. And today I reiterated that we'll continue to work with Congress to achieve a seamless and long-term renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

We agreed that Africa's growth depends, first and foremost, on continued reforms in Africa, by Africans. The leaders here pledged to step up efforts to pursue reforms that attract investment, reduce barriers that stifle trade—especially between African countries—and to promote regional integration. And as I announced yesterday, the United States will increase our support to help build Africa's capacity to trade with itself and with the world.

Ultimately, Africa's prosperity depends on Africa's greatest resource: its people. And I've been very encouraged by the desire of leaders here to partner with us in supporting young entrepreneurs, including through our Young African Leaders Initiative. I think there's an increasing recognition that if countries are going to reach their full economic potential, then they have to invest in women—their education, their skills—and protect them from gender-based violence. And that was a topic of conversation this afternoon. And this week, the United States announced a range of initiatives to help empower women across Africa.

Our New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition continues to grow, aiming to lift 50 million Africans from poverty. In our fight against HIV/AIDS, we'll work with 10 African countries to help them double the number of their children on lifesaving antiretroviral drugs. And even as the United States is deploying some of our medical first responders to West Africa to help control the Ebola outbreak, we're also working to strengthen public health systems, including joining with the African Union to pursue the creation of an African Centers for Disease Control.

I also want to note that the American people are renewing their commitment to Africa. Today InterAction, the leading alliance of American NGOs, is announcing that over the next 3 years, its members will invest $4 billion to promote maternal health, children's health, and the delivery of vaccines and drugs. So this is not just a Government effort, it is also an effort that's spurred on by the private sector. Combined with the investments we announced yesterday—and the commitments made today at the symposium hosted by our spouses—that means this summit has helped to mobilize some $37 billion for Africa's progress on top of obviously the substantial efforts that have been made in the past.

Second, we addressed good governance, which is a foundation of economic growth and free societies. Some African nations are making impressive progress. But we see troubling restrictions on universal rights. So today was an opportunity to highlight the importance of rule of law, open and accountable institutions, strong civil societies, and protection of human rights for all citizens and all communities. And I made the point during our discussion that nations that uphold these rights and principles will ultimately be more prosperous and more economically successful.

In particular, we agreed to step up our collective efforts against the corruption that costs African economies tens of billions of dollars every year, money that ought to be invested in the people of Africa. Several leaders raised the idea of a new partnership to combat illicit finance, and there was widespread agreement. So we decided to convene our experts and develop an action plan to promote the transparency that is essential to economic growth.

Third, we're deepening our security cooperation to meet common threats, from terrorism to human trafficking. We're launching a new Security Governance Initiative to help our African countries continue to build strong, professional security forces to provide for their own security. And we're starting with Kenya, Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Ghana, and Tunisia.

During our discussions, our West African partners made it clear that they want to increase their capacity to respond to crises. So the United States will launch a new effort to bolster the region's early warning and response network and increase their ability to share information about emerging crises.

We also agreed to make significant new investments in African peacekeeping. The United States will provide additional equipment to African peacekeepers in Somalia and the Central African Republic. We will support the African Union's efforts to strengthen its peacekeeping institutions. And most importantly, we're launching a new African peacekeeping rapid response partnership with the goal of quickly deploying African peacekeepers in support of U.N. or AU missions. And we'll join with six countries that in recent years have demonstrated a track record as peacekeepers: Ghana, Senegal, Rwanda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Uganda. And we're going to invite countries beyond Africa to join us in supporting this effort, because the entire world has a stake in the success of peacekeeping in Africa.

In closing, I just want to say that this has been an extraordinary event, an extraordinary summit. Given the success that we've had this week, we agreed that summits like this can be a critical part of our work together going forward, a forcing mechanism for decisions and action. So we agreed that the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit will be a recurring event to hold ourselves accountable for our commitments and to sustain our momentum. And I'll strongly encourage my successor to carry on this work, because Africa must know that they will always have a strong and reliable partner in the United States of America.

So with that, I'm going to take a couple of questions. I'm going to start with Julie Pace of Associated Press. Where's Julie? There she is.

Ebola Outbreak in West Africa/Drug Treatments for Ebola

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. There's been a lot of discussion surrounding this summit about the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. And there's an untested and unproved—unapproved drug in the U.S. that appears to be helping some of the Americans who are infected. Is your administration considering at all sending supplies of this drug if it becomes available to some of these countries in West Africa? And could you discuss a bit the ethics of either providing an untested drug to a foreign country or providing it only to Americans and not to other countries that are harder hit if it could possibly save lives?

The President. Well, I think we've got to let the science guide us. And I don't think all the information is in on whether this drug is helpful. What we do know is that the Ebola virus, both currently and in the past, is controllable if you have a strong public health infrastructure in place.

And the countries that have been affected are the first to admit that what's happened here is, is that their public health systems have been overwhelmed. They weren't able to identify and then isolate cases quickly enough. You did not have a strong trust relationship between some of the communities that were affected and public health workers. As a consequence, it spread more rapidly than has been typical with the periodic Ebola outbreaks that have occurred previously.

But despite obviously the extraordinary pain and hardship of the families and persons who've been affected, and despite the fact that we have to take this very seriously, it is important to remind ourselves, this is not an airborne disease; this is one that can be controlled and contained very effectively if we use the right protocols.

So what we've done is to make sure that we're surging not just U.S. resources, but we've reached out to European partners and partners from other countries, working with the WHO. Let's get all the health workers that we need on the ground. Let's help to bolster the systems that they already have in place. Let's nip as early as possible any additional outbreaks of the disease. And then during the course of that process, I think it's entirely appropriate for us to see if there are additional drugs or medical treatments that can improve

the survivability of what is a very deadly and obviously brutal disease.

So we're going to—we're focusing on the public health approach right now because we know how to do that. But I will continue to seek information about what we're learning with respect to these drugs going forward.

Q. If this drug proves to be effective, would you support fast-tracking its approval in the United States?

The President. I think it's premature for me to say that because I don't have enough information. I don't have enough data right now to offer an opinion on that.

Jon Karl, ABC News.

The President's Use of Executive Authority/Immigration Reform

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. When you were running for President, you said: "The biggest problems we're facing right now have to do with George Bush trying to bring more and more power into the executive branch and not go through Congress at all. And that's what I intend to reverse." So my question to you: Has Congress's inability to do anything significant given you a green light to push the limits of executive power, even a duty to do so? Or put another way, does it bother you more to be accused of being an imperial President, pushing those limits or to be accused of being a do-nothing President who couldn't get anything done because you faced a dysfunctional Congress?

The President. Well, I think that I never have a green light. I'm bound by the Constitution; I'm bound by separation of powers. There are some things we can't do.

Congress has the power of the purse, for example. I would love to fund a large infrastructure proposal right now that would put millions of people to work and boost our GDP. We know we've got roads and bridges and airports and electrical grids that need to be rebuilt. But without the cooperation of Congress, what I can do is speed up the permitting process, for example. I can make sure that we're working with the private sector to see if we can channel investment into much-needed projects. But ultimately, Congress has to pass a budget and authorize spending. So I don't have a green light.

What I am consistently going to do is, wherever I have the legal authorities to make progress on behalf of middle class Americans and folks working to get into the middle class, whether it's by making sure that Federal contractors are paying a fair wage to their workers, making sure that women have the opportunity to make sure that they're getting paid the same as men for doing the same job, where I have the capacity to expand some of the student loan programs that we've already put in place so that repayments are a little more affordable for college graduates—I'm going to take—I'm going to seize those opportunities. And that's what I think the American people expect me to do.

My preference in all these instances is to work with Congress, because not only can Congress do more, but it's going to be longer lasting. And when you look at, for example, congressional inaction, and in particular, the inaction on the part of House Republicans, when it comes to immigration reform, now, here's an area where, as I've said before, not only the American people want to see action, not only is there 80-percent overlap between what Republicans say they want and Democrats say they want, we actually passed a bill out of the Senate that was bipartisan.

And in those circumstances, what the American people expect is that, despite the differences between the parties, there should at least be the capacity to move forward on things we agree on. And that's not what we're seeing right now. So, in the face of that kind of dysfunction, what I can do is scour our authorities to try to make progress.

And we're going to make sure that every time we take one of these steps that we are working within the confines of my executive power. But I promise you, the American people don't want me just standing around twiddling my thumbs and waiting for Congress to get something done. Even as we take these executive actions, I'm going to continue to reach out to Democrats and Republicans—to the Speaker, to the leadership on both sides and in

both Chambers—to try to come up with formulas where we can make progress, even if it's incremental.

Q. Do you believe you have the power to grant work permits to those who are here illegally, as some of your supporters have suggested?

The President. What I certainly recognize with respect to immigration reform—and I've said this in the past—is that we have a broken system. It's underresourced, and we've got to make choices in terms of how we allocate personnel and resources.

So, if I'm going to, for example, send more immigration judges down to the border to process some of these unaccompanied children that have arrived at the border, then that's coming from someplace else, and we're going to have to prioritize. That's well within our authorities and prosecutorial discretion.

My preference would be an actual comprehensive immigration law. And we already have a bipartisan law that would solve a whole bunch of these problems. Until that happens, I'm going to have to make choices. That's what I was elected to do.

Margaret Talev, Bloomberg.

Corporate Inversions

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Along the lines of executive authority, Treasury Secretary Jack Lew has previously said that the executive branch of Government doesn't have the authority to slow or stop corporate inversions, the practice that you have called distasteful, unpatriotic, et cetera. But now he is reviewing options to do so. And this is an issue that a lot of business, probably including some of the ones who were paying a lot of attention to this summit, are interested in. So what I wanted to ask you was, what prompted this apparent reversal? What actions are now under consideration? Will you consider an Executive order that would limit or ban such companies from getting Federal contracts? And how soon would you like to see Treasury act, given Congress's schedule?

The President. Just to review why we're concerned here. You have accountants going to some big corporations—multinational corporations, but that are clearly U.S.-based and have the bulk of their operations in the United States—and these accountants are saying, you know what, we found a great loophole; if you just flip your citizenship to another country, even though it's just a paper transaction, we think we can get you out of paying a whole bunch of taxes.

Well, it's not fair. It's not right. The lost revenue to Treasury means it's got to be made up somewhere, and that typically is going to be a bunch of hard-working Americans who either pay through higher taxes themselves or through reduced services. And in the meantime, the company is still using all the services and all the benefits of effectively being a U.S. corporation; they just decided that they'd go through this paper exercise.

So there is legislation working its way through Congress that would eliminate some of these tax loopholes entirely. And it's true what Treasury Secretary Lew previously said, that we can't solve the entire problem administratively. But what we are doing is examining, are there elements to how existing statutes are interpreted by rule or by regulation or tradition or practice that can at least discourage some of the folks who may be trying to take advantage of this loophole?

And I think it's something that would really bother the average American, the idea that somebody renounces their citizenship, but continues to entirely benefit from operating in the United States of America just to avoid paying a whole bunch of taxes.

We'll—we're reviewing all of our options. As usual, and related to the answer I gave Jonathan about executive actions, my preference would always be for us to go ahead and get something done in Congress. And keep in mind, it's still a small number of companies that are resorting to this, because I think most American companies are proud to be American, recognize the benefits of being American, and are responsible actors and willing to pay their fair share of taxes to support all the benefits that they receive from being here.

But we don't want to see this trend grow. We don't want companies who have up until

now been playing by the rules suddenly looking over their shoulder and saying, you know what, some of our competitors are gaming the system, and we need to do it too. That kind of herd mentality, I think, is something we want to avoid. So we want to move quickly, as quickly as possible.

Q. Just to clarify, the Federal contracting seems like an area that you've liked to—it's worked well for you on issues like promoting gay rights or contraception policy. Is it fair to assume that that would—attaching this to Federal contractors would be the first thing you would think of?

The President. Margaret, I'm not going to announce specifics in dribs and drabs. When we've done a thorough evaluation and we understand what our authorities are, I'll let you know.

Chris Jansing, NBC News.

Ukraine/International Sanctions Against Russia

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Russia said today that it is going to ban food and agricultural product imports. That was about $1.3 billion last year. At the same time, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said that the massing of troops along the border of Ukraine increases the likelihood of an invasion. Are sanctions not working?

The President. Well, we don't know yet whether sanctions are working. Sanctions are working as intended in putting enormous pressure and strain on the Russian economy. That's not my estimation; if you look at the markets and you look at estimates in terms of capital flight, if you look at projections for Russian growth, what you're seeing is that the economy has ground to a halt. Somewhere between $100 and $200 billion of capital flight has taken place. You're not seeing a lot of investors coming in new to start businesses inside of Russia.

And it has presented the choice to President Putin as to whether he is going to try to resolve the issues in eastern Ukraine through diplomacy and peaceful means, recognizing that Ukraine is a sovereign country and that it is up ultimately to the Ukrainian people to make decisions about their own lives; or alternatively, continue on the course that he's on, in which case, he's going to be hurting his economy and hurting his own people over the long term.

And in that sense, we are doing exactly what we should be doing. And we're very pleased that our European allies and partners joined us in this process, as well as a number of countries around the world.

Having said all that, the issue is not resolved yet. You still have fighting in eastern Ukraine. Civilians are still dying. We've already seen some of the consequences of this conflict in the loss of the Malaysian Airlines airline—or jetliner.

And the sooner that we can get back on a track in which there are serious discussions taking place to assure that all Ukrainians are heard, that they can work through the political process, that they're represented, that the reforms that have already been offered by the Government in Kiev are implemented to protect Russian speakers, to assure decentralization of power—the sooner that we move on those, and the sooner that President Putin recognizes that Ukraine is an independent country, it's only at that point where we can say that the problem has truly been solved. But in the meantime, sanctions are working the way they're supposed to.

Q. The troops that are massing on the border are more highly trained. They seem to have more sophisticated weaponry, according to intelligence. Does that make you reconsider—as a few Democrats have suggested—providing lethal aid to Ukraine, given those troop movements?

The President. Well, keep in mind that the Russian Army is a lot bigger than the Ukrainian Army. So the issue here is not whether the Ukrainian Army has some additional weaponry. At least up until this point, they've been fighting a group of separatists who have engaged in some terrible violence, but who can't match the Ukrainian Army.

Now, if you start seeing an invasion by Russia, that's obviously a different set of questions. We're not there yet. What we have been doing is providing a whole host of assistance packages to the Ukrainian Government and to their mil-

itary, and we will continue to work with them to evaluate on a day-by-day, week-by-week basis what exactly they need in order to be able to defend their country and to deal with the separatist elements that currently are being armed by Russia.

But the best thing we can do for Ukraine is to try to get back on a political track.

David Ohito, the Standard.

Press Freedom, Counterterrorism Efforts, and Governance in African Nations

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You have been hosting African kings, Prime Ministers, and Presidents for the last 3 days. But back home in Africa, media freedom is under threat. The work of journalists is becoming increasingly difficult. In Egypt, our Al Jazeera colleagues are in jail. In Ethiopia, dozens of journalists are in prison. In Kenya, they have passed very bad laws targeting the media. What can the international community do to ensure that we have a strong media in Africa and, more importantly, to secure the release of the journalists who are behind bars?

And, two, so many countries in Africa are facing threats of terror. I'm glad you've mentioned a few measures you're going to take. But what can the international community do also to neutralize terror threats in Mali, Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya? Could that be the reason you have skipped Kenya in your visits to Africa? Thank you. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm sorry, what was the last part of the question?

Q. Could the terror threats be the reason you have skipped Kenya in your visits to Africa?

The President. Oh, no, no, no. [*Laughter*] The—well, first of all, with respect to journalists in the media, the last session that we had on good governance emphasized that good governance means everybody has a voice, that government is transparent and thereby accountable. And even though leaders don't always like it, the media plays a crucial role in assuring people that they have the proper information to evaluate the policies that their leaders are pursuing.

And so we have been very consistent in pushing governments not just in Africa, but around the world, to respect the right of journalists to practice their trade as a critical part of civil society and a critical part of any democratic norm. The specific issue of the Al Jazeera journalists in Egypt, we've been clear both publicly and privately that they should be released. And we have been troubled by some of the laws that have been passed around the world that seem to restrict the ability of journalists to pursue stories or write stories. We've also been disturbed by efforts to control the Internet. Part of what's happened over the last decade or two is that new media, new technology allow people to get information that previously would have never been accessible or only to a few specialists. And now people can punch something up on the Internet and pull up information that's relevant to their own lives and their own societies and communities. So we're going to continue to push back against these efforts.

As is true on a whole range of issues—and I've said this in the past—many times, we will work with countries even though they're not perfect on every issue. And we find that in some cases, engaging a country that generally is a good partner, but is not performing optimally when it comes to all of the various categories of human rights, that we can be effective by working with them on certain areas and criticizing them and trying to elicit improvements in other areas. And even among countries that generally have strong human rights records, there are areas where there are problems. That's true of the United States, by the way.

And so the good news—and we heard this in the summit—is that more and more countries are recognizing that in the absence of good governance, in the absence of accountability and transparency, that's not only going to have an effect domestically on the legitimacy of a government, it's going to have an effect on economic development and growth. Because ultimately, in an information age, open societies have the capacity to innovate and educate and move faster and be part of the global

marketplace more than closed societies do over the long term. I believe that.

Now, with respect to terrorism, I think there's uniform concern of terrorist infiltration in many countries throughout Africa. Obviously, this is a concern that we have globally. A lot of the initiatives that we put forward were designed to partner so that countries, first and foremost, can deal with these problems within their own borders or regionally. And the United States doesn't have a desire to expand and create a big footprint inside of Africa. What we do want to make sure we can do is partner with the African Union, with ECOWAS, with individual countries to build up their capacity.

And one of the encouraging things in the sessions was a recognition that fighting terrorism also requires security forces that are professional, that are disciplined, that themselves are not engaging in human rights violations; that part of the lesson that we've all learned about terrorism is that it is possible in reaction to terrorism to actually accelerate the disease if the response is one that alienates populations or particular ethnic groups or particular religions. And so the work that we're doing, including the security initiatives that I announced today, I think can make a big difference in that direction.

It's not just a matter of us providing better equipment or better training. That's a part of it, but part of it is also making sure that these security forces and the intelligence operations are coordinated and professional and they're not alienating populations. The more we do that, the more effective we can be.

Last point I'll make is, on good governance, one of the best inoculators against terrorist infiltration is a society in which everybody feels as if they have a stake in the existing order and they feel that their grievances can be resolved through political means rather than through violence. And so that's just one more reason why good governance has to be part of the recipe that we use for a strong, stable, and prosperous Africa.

Last question, Jérôme Cartillier [Agence France-Presse].

Situation in Gaza and Israel

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Earlier today Israeli Prime Minister described the Gaza operation as "justified and proportionate." Do you agree with these two words? And Israel and Hamas seems to be at odds over prolonging the cease-fire. Are you hopeful the cease-fire—a true cease-fire—can be achieved? And what exact role can the U.S. play in the current talks going on in Cairo?

The President. I have said from the beginning that no country would tolerate rockets being launched into their cities. And as a consequence, I have consistently supported Israel's right to defend itself, and that includes doing what it needs to do to prevent rockets from landing on population centers and, more recently, as we learned, preventing tunnels from being dug under their territory that can be used to launch terrorist attacks. I also think it is important to remember that Hamas acts extraordinarily irresponsibly when it is deliberately siting rocket launchers in population centers, putting populations at risk because of that particularly—particular military strategy.

Now, having said all that, I've also expressed my distress at what's happened to innocent civilians, including women and children, during the course of this process. And I'm very glad that we have at least temporarily achieved a cease-fire. The question now is how do we build on this temporary cessation of violence and move forward in a sustainable way.

We intend to support the process that's taking place in Egypt. I think the short-term goal has to be to make sure that rocket launches do not resume, that the work that the Israeli Government did in closing off these tunnels has been completed, and that we are now in the process of helping to rebuild a Gaza that's been really badly damaged as a consequence of this conflict. Long term, there has to be a recognition that Gaza cannot sustain itself permanently closed off from the world and incapable of providing some opportunity—jobs, economic growth—for the population that lives there, particularly given how dense that population is, how young that population is.

We're going to have to see a shift in opportunity for the people of Gaza. I have no sympathy for Hamas. I have great sympathy for ordinary people who are struggling within Gaza. And the question then becomes, can we find a formula in which Israel has greater assurance that Gaza will not be a launching pad for further attacks, perhaps more dangerous attacks as technology develops, into their country, but at the same time, ordinary Palestinians have some prospects for an opening of Gaza so that they do not feel walled off and incapable of pursuing basic prosperity?

I think there are formulas that are available, but they're going to require risks on the part of political leaders. They're going to require a slow rebuilding of trust, which is obviously very difficult in the aftermath of the kind of violence that we've seen. So I don't think we get there right away, but the U.S. goal right now would be to make sure that the cease-fire holds, that Gaza can begin the process of rebuilding, and that some measures are taken so that the people of Gaza feel some sense of hope and the people of Israel feel confident that they're not going to have a repeat of the kind of rocket launches that we've seen over the last several weeks.

And Secretary Kerry has been in consistent contact with all the parties involved. We expect we will continue to be trying to work as diligently as we can to move the process forward.

It is also going to need to involve the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank. I have no sympathy for Hamas. I have great sympathy for some of the work that has been done in cooperation with Israel and the international community by the Palestinian Authority. And they've shown themselves to be responsible. They have recognized Israel. They are prepared to move forward to arrive at a two-state solution.

I think Abu Mazen is sincere in his desire for peace. But they have also been weakened, I think, during this process. The populations in the West Bank may have also lost confidence or lost a sense of hope in terms of how to move forward. We have to rebuild that as well. And they are the delegation that's leading the Palestinian negotiators. And my hope is, is that we'll be engaging with them to try to move what has been a very tragic situation over the last several weeks into a more constructive path. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody. And thank you all who participated in the Africa Summit. It was an outstanding piece of work. And I want to remind folks, in case they've forgotten, of the incredible young people who participated in our fellows program. We're very proud of you, and we're looking forward to seeing all the great things that you do when you go back home. All right?

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 6:14 p.m. at the Department of State. In his remarks, the President referred to President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. A reporter referred to former President George W. Bush.

Remarks on Signing the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 at Fort Belvoir, Virginia

August 7, 2014

Hello, Fort Belvoir! Everybody, have a seat. I think I'm going to take Sergeant Major McGruder on the road. [*Laughter*] I'm just going to have him introduce me wherever I go. [*Laughter*] He got me excited, and I'm being—I get introduced all the time. So thank you, James, for your incredible service to our country. Give James a big round of applause.

I also want to say a big thanks to America's new Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Bob McDonald, who is here. Stand up, Bob. As some of you may know, Bob headed up one of the biggest, most successful companies in the world. But he also was a West Point grad, also a Ranger who served valiantly on behalf of his country. And this a labor of love for him, and

he has hit the ground running. He's heading out to VA hospitals and clinics around the country, starting with Phoenix tomorrow. So thank you, Bob, for accepting this charge and this challenge and making sure that we're doing right by our veterans. I know you're going to do a great job. [*Applause*] Really proud of him.

I want to thank all the Members of Congress who are here today, and I especially want to thank those who led the fight to give Bob and the VA more of the resources and flexibility that they need to make sure every veteran has access to the care and benefits that they have earned: Senator Bernie Sanders, Senators Richard Burr, Representative Mike Michaud, Representative Jeff Miller. Give them a big round of applause. Thank you. Thanks for the good work.

And we are all grateful to our outstanding veterans service organizations for all the work that they do on behalf of our veterans and their families. So thank you very much to all the veterans service organizations. Most of all, I want to thank General Buchanan and Sergeant Major Turnbull and all of you who serve here at Fort Belvoir.

For nearly a century, this base has helped keep America strong and secure. Seventy years ago, troops from here—the 29th Infantry Division, the Blue and Gray—were some of the first to storm Omaha Beach. And in recent years, many of you have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. And you've risked your lives on multiple tours to defend our Nation. And as a country, we have a sacred obligation to serve you as well as you've served us, an obligation that doesn't end with your tour of duty.

Every day, hundreds of thousands of dedicated public servants at the VA help us honor that commitment. At VA hospitals across America, you've got doctors and nurses who are delivering world-class care to America's veterans. You've got millions of veterans and their families who are profoundly grateful for the good work that is done at the VA. And as Commander in Chief, I'm grateful too.

But over the last few months, we've discovered some inexcusable misconduct at some VA health care facilities: stories of our veterans denied the care they needed, long wait times being covered up, cooking the books. This is wrong. It was outrageous. And working together, we set out to fix it and do right by our veterans across the board, no matter how long it took.

And we've already taken the first steps to change the way the VA does business. We've held people accountable for misconduct. Some have already been relieved of their duties, and investigations are ongoing. We've reached out to more than 215,000 veterans so far to make sure that we're getting them off wait lists and into clinics both inside and outside the VA system.

We're moving ahead with urgent reforms, including stronger management and leadership and oversight. And we're instituting a critical culture of accountability, rebuilding our leadership team, starting at the top with Secretary McDonald. And one of his first acts is that he's directed all VA health care facilities to hold town halls to hear directly from the veterans that they serve to make sure that we're hearing honest assessments about what's going on.

Now, in a few minutes, we'll take another step forward when I sign into law the VA reform bill that was passed overwhelmingly, with bipartisan majorities, and that doesn't happen often in Congress. It's a good deal. [*Laughter*]

This bill covers a lot of ground, from expanding survivor benefits and educational opportunities to improving care for veterans struggling with traumatic brain injury and for victims of sexual assault. But today I want to focus on the ways this bill will help us ensure that veterans have access to the care that they've earned.

First of all, this will give the VA more of the resources that it needs. It will help the VA hire more doctors and more nurses and staff more clinics. As a new generation of veterans returns home from war and transitions into civilian life, we have to make sure the VA system can keep pace with that new demand. Keep in mind that I have increased funding for the VA since I came into office by extraordinary amounts. But we also have extraordinary numbers of veter-

ans coming home. And so the demand, even though we've increased the VA budget, is still higher than the resources that we've got. This bill helps to address that.

Second, for veterans who can't get timely care through the VA, this bill will help them get the care they need someplace else. And this is particularly important for veterans who are in more remote areas, in rural areas. If you live more than 40 miles from a VA facility or if VA doctors can't see you within a reasonable amount of time, you'll have the chance to see a doctor outside the VA system.

Now finally, we're giving the VA Secretary more authority to hold people accountable. We've got to give Bob the authority so that he can move quickly to remove senior executives who fail to meet the standards of conduct and competence that the American people demand. If you engage in an unethical practice, if you cover up a serious problem, you should be fired. Period. It shouldn't be that difficult. And if you blow the whistle on an unethical practice or bring a problem to the attention of higher-ups, you should be thanked. You should be protected for doing the right thing. You shouldn't be ignored—you shouldn't be ignored—and you certainly shouldn't be punished.

"To care for him [or her] who shall have borne the battle." That's the heart of the VA's motto. That's what the bill I'm about to sign will help us achieve. But I want to be clear about something: This will not and cannot be the end of our effort. Implementing this law will take time. It's going to require focus on the part of all of us. And even as we focus on the urgent reforms we need at the VA right now, particularly around wait lists and the health care system, we can't lose sight of our long-term goals for our servicemembers and our veterans.

The good news is, we've cut the disability claims backlog by more than half. But let's now eliminate the backlog. Let's get rid of it. The good news is, we've poured major resources into improving mental health care. But now let's make sure our veterans actually get the care they need when they need it. The good news is, we've helped to get thousands of homeless veterans off the street, made an unprecedented effort to end veterans homelessness. We should have zero tolerance for that. But we've got to—still more work to do in cities and towns across America to get more veterans into the homes they deserve.

We've helped more than a million veterans and their spouses and children go to college through the post-9/11 GI bill. But now we've got to help even more of them earn their educations and make sure that they're getting a good bargain in the schools they enroll in.

We've rallied companies to hire hundreds of thousands of veterans and their spouses. That's the good news. With the help of Jill Biden and Michelle Obama, two pretty capable women—[*laughter*]—they know what they're doing, and nobody says no to them, including me. [*Laughter*] But now we've got to help more of our highly skilled veterans find careers in this new economy.

So America has to do right by all who serve under our proud flag. And Congress needs to do more also. I urge the Senate, once again, to finally confirm my nominee for Assistant Secretary for Policy at the VA, Linda Schwartz; my nominee to lead the Board of Veterans' Appeals, Constance Tobias; my nominee for CFO, Helen Tierney. Each of them have been waiting for months for a yes-or-no vote, in Constance's case for more than a year.

They're ready to serve. They're ready to get to work. It's not that hard. [*Laughter*] Didn't used to be this hard to just go ahead and get somebody confirmed who is well qualified. Nobody says they're not. It's just, the Senate doesn't seem to move very fast. As soon as the Senate gets back in September, they should act to put these outstanding public servants in place. Our veterans don't have time for politics. They need these public servants on the job right now.

So let me wrap up by saying 2 months ago, I had the chance to spend some time with some of America's oldest veterans at Omaha Beach. Some of you may have seen on television the celebration, the commemoration of those incredible days, of the 70th anniversary of D-day.

And this is my second visit to democracy's beachhead. It's the second time I had gone as President. And it's a place where it's impossible not to be moved by the courage and the sacrifice of free men and women who volunteer to lay down their lives for people they've never met, ideals that they can't live without. That's why they're willing to do these things.

And some of these folks that you met, they were 18 at the time. Some of them were lying about their age. They were 16, landing either at the beach or sometimes behind the lines. The casualty rates were unbelievable. Being there brought back memories of my own grandfather, who marched in Patton's army, and then came home. And like so many veterans of his generation, they went to school and got married and raised families. And he eventually helped to raise me.

And on that visit to Normandy, I brought some of today's servicemembers with me because I wanted to introduce them to the veterans of D-day and to show the veterans of D-day that their legacy is in good hands, that there's a direct line between the sacrifices then and the sacrifices that folks have made in remote places today. Because in more than a decade of war, today's men and women in uniform—all of you—you've met every mission we've asked of you.

Today, our troops continue to serve and risk their lives in Afghanistan. It continues to be a difficult and dangerous mission, as we were tragically reminded again this week in the attack that injured a number of our coalition troops and took the life of a dedicated American soldier, Major General Harold Greene. Our prayers are with the Greene family, as they are with all the Gold Star families and those who have sacrificed so much for our Nation.

But 4 months from now, our combat mission in Afghanistan will be complete. Our longest war will come to an honorable end. In the years to come, many from this generation will step out of uniform, and their legacy will be secure. But whether or not this country properly repays their heroism, properly repays their patriotism, their service, and their sacrifice, that's in our hands.

I'm committed to seeing that we fulfill that commitment. Because the men and women of this generation, this 9/11 generation of servicemembers, are the leaders we need for our time, as community leaders and business leaders, I hope maybe some leaders in our politics as well.

From the greatest generation to the 9/11 generation, America's heroes have answered the call to serve. I have no greater honor than serving as your President and Commander in Chief. And I have no greater privilege than the chance to help make sure that our country keeps the promises that we've made to everybody who signs up to serve. And as long as I hold this office, we're going to spend each and every day working to do right by you and your families. I'm grateful to you.

God bless you. God bless America. With that, I am going to sign this bill. Thank you very much, everybody.

All right. Squeeze in, everybody. This is good work.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

Really appreciate it. It's a good piece of legislation, and it will help. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. in the Wallace Theater. In his remarks, he referred to Sgt. Maj. James McGruder, USA; Maj. Gen. Jeffrey S. Buchanan, USA, commanding general, and CSM David O. Turnbull, USA, command sergeant major, National Capital Region and Military District of Washington; Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden; and Maj. Gen. Harold J. Greene, USA, deputy commanding general, Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan, who was killed in Afghanistan on August 5. H.R. 3230, approved August 7, was assigned Public Law No. 113–146.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Export Control Regulations
August 7, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within the 90-day period prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency in light of the expiration of the Export Administration Act of 1979, is to continue in effect for 1 year beyond August 17, 2014.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the Commencement of United States Military Operations in Iraq
August 7, 2014

Good evening. Today I authorized two operations in Iraq: targeted airstrikes to protect our American personnel and a humanitarian effort to help save thousands of Iraqi civilians who are trapped on a mountain without food and water and facing almost certain death. Let me explain the actions we're taking and why.

First, I said in June, as the terrorist group ISIL began an advance across Iraq, that the United States would be prepared to take targeted military action in Iraq if and when we determined that the situation required it. In recent days, these terrorists have continued to move across Iraq and have neared the city of Erbil, where American diplomats and civilians serve at our consulate and American military personnel advise Iraqi forces.

To stop the advance on Erbil, I've directed our military to take targeted strikes against ISIL terrorist convoys should they move toward the city. We intend to stay vigilant and take action if these terrorist forces threaten our personnel or facilities anywhere in Iraq, including our consulate in Erbil and our Embassy in Baghdad. We're also providing urgent assistance to Iraqi Government and Kurdish forces so they can more effectively wage the fight against ISIL.

Second, at the request of the Iraqi Government, we've begun operations to help save Iraqi civilians stranded on the mountain. As ISIL has marched across Iraq, it has waged a ruthless campaign against innocent Iraqis. And these terrorists have been especially barbaric towards religious minorities, including Christian and Yazidis, a small and ancient religious sect. Countless Iraqis have been displaced, and chilling reports describe ISIL militants rounding up families, conducting mass executions, and enslaving Yazidi women.

In recent days, Yazidi women, men, and children from the area of Sinjar have fled for their lives. And thousands—perhaps tens of thousands—are now hiding high up on the mountain, with little but the clothes on their backs. They're without food; they're without water. People are starving, and children are dying of thirst. Meanwhile, ISIL forces below have called for the systematic destruction of the entire Yazidi people, which would constitute genocide. So these innocent families are faced with a horrible choice: descend the

mountain and be slaughtered or stay and slowly die of thirst and hunger.

Now, I've said before, the United States cannot and should not intervene every time there's a crisis in the world. So let me be clear about why we must act and act now. When we face a situation like we do on that mountain, with innocent people facing the prospect of violence on a horrific scale; when we have a mandate to help, in this case, a request from the Iraqi Government; and when we have the unique capabilities to help avert a massacre, then I believe the United States of America cannot turn a blind eye. We can act carefully and responsibly to prevent a potential act of genocide. That's what we're doing on that mountain.

I've therefore authorized targeted airstrikes, if necessary, to help forces in Iraq as they fight to break the siege of Mount Sinjar and protect the civilians trapped there. Already, American aircraft have begun conducting humanitarian airdrops of food and water to help these desperate men, women, and children survive. Earlier this week, one Iraqi in the area cried to the world, "There is no one coming to help." Well, today America is coming to help. We're also consulting with other countries—and the United Nations—who have called for action to address this humanitarian crisis.

I know that many of you are rightly concerned about any American military action in Iraq, even limited strikes like these. I understand that. I ran for this office in part to end our war in Iraq and welcome our troops home, and that's what we've done. As Commander in Chief, I will not allow the United States to be dragged into fighting another war in Iraq. And so, even as we support Iraqis as they take the fight to these terrorists, American combat troops will not be returning to fight in Iraq, because there is no American military solution to the larger crisis in Iraq. The only lasting solution is reconciliation among Iraqi communities and stronger Iraqi security forces.

However, we can and should support moderate forces who can bring stability to Iraq. So, even as we carry out these two missions, we will continue to pursue a broader strategy that empowers Iraqis to confront this crisis. Iraqi leaders need to come together and forge a new Government that represents the legitimate interests of all Iraqis and that can fight back against the threats like ISIL. Iraqis have named a new President, a new Speaker of Parliament, and are seeking consensus on a new Prime Minister. This is the progress that needs to continue in order to reverse the momentum of the terrorists who prey on Iraq's divisions.

Once Iraq has a new Government, the United States will work with it and other countries in the region to provide increased support to deal with this humanitarian crisis and counterterrorism challenge. None of Iraq's neighbors have an interest in this terrible suffering or instability.

And so we'll continue to work with our friends and allies to help refugees get the shelter and food and water they so desperately need and to help Iraqis push back against ISIL. The several hundred American advisers that I ordered to Iraq will continue to assess what more we can do to help train, advise, and support Iraqi forces going forward. And just as I consulted Congress on the decisions I made today, we will continue to do so going forward.

My fellow Americans, the world is confronted by many challenges. And while America has never been able to right every wrong, America has made the world a more secure and prosperous place. And our leadership is necessary to underwrite the global security and prosperity that our children and our grandchildren will depend upon. We do so by adhering to a set of core principles: We do whatever is necessary to protect our people, we support our allies when they're in danger, we lead coalitions of countries to uphold international norms, and we strive to stay true to the fundamental values—the desire to live with basic freedom and dignity—that is common to human beings wherever they are. That's why people all over the world look to the United States of America to lead. And that's why we do.

So let me close by assuring you that there is no decision that I take more seriously than the use of military force. Over the last several years, we have brought the vast majority of our

troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan. And I've been careful to resist calls to turn, time and again, to our military, because America has other tools in our arsenal than our military. We can also lead with the power of our diplomacy, our economy, and our ideals.

But when the lives of American citizens are at risk, we will take action. That's my responsibility as Commander in Chief. And when many thousands of innocent civilians are faced with the danger of being wiped out, and we have the capacity to do something about it, we will take action. That is our responsibility as Americans. That's a hallmark of American leadership. That's who we are.

So tonight we give thanks to our men and women in uniform, especially our brave pilots and crews over Iraq who are protecting our fellow Americans and saving the lives of so many men, women, and children that they will never meet. They represent American leadership at its best. As a nation, we should be proud of them and of our country's enduring commitment to uphold our own security and the dignity of our fellow human beings.

God bless our Armed Forces, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Fuad Masum and Speaker of the Council of Representatives Salim al-Jabouri of Iraq. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Commencement of United States Military Operations in Iraq

August 8, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As I announced publicly on August 7, 2014, I have authorized the U.S. Armed Forces to conduct targeted airstrikes in Iraq. These military operations will be limited in their scope and duration as necessary to protect American personnel in Iraq by stopping the current advance on Erbil by the terrorist group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and to help forces in Iraq as they fight to break the siege of Mount Sinjar and protect the civilians trapped there.

Pursuant to this authorization, on August 8, 2014, U.S. military forces commenced targeted airstrike operations in Iraq.

In addition, I have authorized U.S. Armed Forces to provide humanitarian assistance in Iraq in an operation that commenced on August 7, 2014. These operations will also be limited to supporting the civilians trapped on Mount Sinjar.

I have directed these actions, which are in the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. These actions are being undertaken in coordination with the Iraqi government.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

The President's Weekly Address
August 9, 2014

This week, I authorized two operations in Iraq. First, I directed our military to take action to protect our American diplomats and military advisers serving in the city of Erbil. In recent days, terrorist forces neared the city. Thursday night I made it clear that if they attempt to advance further, our military would respond with targeted strikes. That's what we've done. And if necessary, that's what we will continue to do. We have Americans serving across Iraq, including our Embassy in Baghdad, and we'll do whatever is needed to protect our people.

Second, we've begun a humanitarian effort to help those Iraqi civilians trapped on that mountain. The terrorists that have taken over parts of Iraq have been especially brutal to religious minorities: rounding up families, executing men, enslaving women, and threatening the systematic destruction of an entire religious community, which would be genocide.

The thousands—perhaps tens of thousands—of Iraqi men, women, and children who fled to that mountain were starving and dying of thirst. The food and water we airdropped will help them survive. I've also approved targeted American airstrikes to help Iraqi forces break the siege and rescue these families. Earlier this week, one anguished Iraqi in this area cried to the world, "There is no one coming to help." Today, America is helping.

The United States cannot and should not intervene every time there's a crisis in the world. But when there's a situation like the one on this mountain—when countless innocent people are facing a massacre and when we have the ability to prevent it—the United States can't just look away. That's not who we are. We're Americans. We act. We lead. And that's what we're going to do on that mountain. As one American who wrote to me yesterday said, "It's the right thing to do."

As Commander in Chief, I will not allow the United States to be dragged into fighting another war in Iraq. American combat troops will not be returning to fight in Iraq, because there's no American military solution to the larger crisis there.

What we will do is continue our broader strategy in Iraq. We will protect our citizens. We will work with the international community to address this humanitarian crisis. We'll help prevent these terrorists from having a permanent safe haven from which to attack America. And we'll continue to urge Iraqi communities to reconcile, come together, and fight back against these terrorists so the people of Iraq have the opportunity for a better future, the opportunity for which so many Americans gave their lives in Iraq in a long, hard war.

Today we salute our brave men and women in uniform, especially our courageous pilots and crews over Iraq. They're protecting our fellow Americans. They're helping save the lives of innocent people on a mountain, people who today know that there's a country called America that cares for them too and that is willing to stand up, not just for our own security, but for the dignity and freedom that belongs to all people.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:50 p.m. on August 8 in the State Dining Room at the White House for broadcast on August 9. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 8, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 9.

Remarks on the Situation in Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters
August 9, 2014

The President. Good morning. Over the past 2 days, American pilots and crews have served with courage and skill in the skies over Iraq.

First, American forces have conducted targeted airstrikes against terrorist forces outside the city of Erbil to prevent them from advanc-

ing on the city and to protect our American diplomats and military personnel. So far, these strikes have successfully destroyed arms and equipment that ISIL terrorists could have used against Erbil. Meanwhile, Kurdish forces on the ground continue to defend the city, and the United States and the Iraqi Government have stepped up our military assistance to Kurdish forces as they wage their fight.

Second, our humanitarian effort continues to help the men, women, and children stranded on Mount Sinjar. American forces have so far conducted two successful airdrops, delivering thousands of meals and gallons of water to these desperate men, women, and children. And American aircraft are positioned to strike ISIL terrorists around the mountain to help forces in Iraq break the siege and rescue those who are trapped there.

Now, even as we deal with these immediate situations, we continue to pursue a broader strategy in Iraq. We will protect our American citizens in Iraq, whether they're diplomats, civilians, or military. If these terrorists threaten our facilities or our personnel, we will take action to protect our people.

We will continue to provide military assistance and advice to the Iraqi Government and Kurdish forces as they battle these terrorists so that the terrorists cannot establish a permanent safe haven.

We will continue to work with the international community to deal with the growing humanitarian crisis in Iraq. Even as our attention is focused on preventing an act of genocide and helping the men and women and children on the mountain, countless Iraqis have been driven or fled from their homes, including many Christians.

This morning I spoke with Prime Minister Cameron of the United Kingdom and President Hollande of France. I'm pleased that both leaders expressed their strong support for our actions and have agreed to join us in providing humanitarian assistance to Iraqi civilians who are suffering so much. Once again, America is proud to act alongside our closest friends and allies.

More broadly, the United Nations in Iraq is working urgently to help respond to the needs of those Iraqis fleeing from areas under threat. The U.N. Security Council has called on the international community to do everything it can to provide food, water, and shelter. And in my calls with allies and partners around the world, I'll continue to urge them to join us in this humanitarian effort.

Finally, we continue to call on Iraqis to come together and form the inclusive government that Iraq needs right now. Vice President Biden has been speaking to Iraqi leaders, and our team in Baghdad is in close touch with the Iraqi Government. All Iraqi communities are ultimately threatened by these barbaric terrorists, and all Iraqi communities need to unite to defend their country.

Just as we are focused on the situation in the north affecting Kurds and the Iraqi minorities, Sunni and Shia in different parts of Iraq have suffered mightily at the hands of ISIL. Once an inclusive Government is in place, I'm confident it will be easier to mobilize all Iraqis against ISIL and to mobilize greater support from our friends and allies. Ultimately, only Iraqis can ensure the security and stability of Iraq. The United States can't do it for them, but we can and will be partners in that effort.

One final thing: As we go forward, we'll continue to consult with Congress and coordinate closely with our allies and partners. And as Americans, we will continue to show gratitude to our men and women in uniform who are conducting our operations there. When called, they were ready, as they always are. When given their mission, they performed with distinction, as they always do. And when we see them serving with such honor and compassion, defending our fellow citizens and saving the lives of people they've never met, it makes us proud to be Americans, as we always will be.

So with that, let me take a couple questions. Yes.

Humanitarian Situation in Iraq/Formation of New Government in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, for how long a period of time do you see these airstrikes continuing for?

And is your goal there to contain ISIS or to destroy it?

The President. I'm not going to give a particular timetable, because as I've said from the start, wherever and whenever U.S. personnel and facilities are threatened, it's my obligation, my responsibility as Commander in Chief, to make sure that they are protected. And we're not moving our Embassy anytime soon. And we're not moving our consulate anytime soon. And that means that, given the challenging security environment, we're going to maintain vigilance and ensure that our people are safe.

Our initial goal is to not only make sure Americans are protected, but also to deal with this humanitarian situation in Sinjar. We feel confident that we can prevent ISIL from going up a mountain and slaughtering the people who are there. But the next step, which is going to be complicated logistically, is how do we give safe passage for people down from the mountain, and where can we ultimately relocate them so that they are safe. That's the kind of coordination that we need to do internationally.

I was very pleased to get the cooperation of both Prime Minister Cameron and President Hollande in addressing some of the immediate needs in terms of airdrops and some of the assets and logistical support that they're providing. But there's a broader set of questions that our experts now are engaged in with the United Nations and our allies and partners, and that is, how do we potentially create a safe corridor or some other mechanism so that these people can move? That may take some time, because there are varying estimates of how many people are up there, but they're in the thousands, and moving them is not simple in this kind of security environment.

Just to give people a sense, though, of a timetable—that the most important timetable that I'm focused on right now is the Iraqi Government getting formed and finalized. Because in the absence of an Iraqi Government, it is very hard to get a unified effort by Iraqis against ISIL. We can conduct airstrikes, but ultimately, there's not going to be an American military solution to this problem. There's going to have to be an Iraqi solution that America and other countries and allies support. And that can't happen effectively until you have a legitimate Iraqi Government.

So right now we have a President, we have a Speaker. What we don't yet have is a Prime Minister and a Cabinet that is formed that can go ahead and move forward and then start reaching out to all the various groups and factions inside of Iraq and can give confidence to populations in the Sunni areas that ISIL is not the only game in town. It also then allows us to take those Iraqi security forces that are able and functional, and they understand who they're reporting to and what they're fighting for and what the chain of command is. And it provides a structure in which better cooperation is taking place between the Kurdish region and Baghdad.

So we're going to be pushing very hard to encourage Iraqis to get their Government together. Until we do that, it is going to be hard to get the unity of effort that allows us to not just play defense, but also engage in some offense. Yes.

U.S. Military Role in Iraq/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Formation of New Government in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, the United States has fought long wars in Afghanistan and Iraq with uncertain outcomes.

The President. Right.

Q. How do you assure the American people that we're not getting dragged into another war in Iraq? Have you underestimated the power of ISIS? And finally, you said that you involved international partners in humanitarian efforts. Is there any thought to talking to international partners as far as military actions to prevent the spread of ISIS?

The President. Well, a couple of things I would say. Number one, I've been very clear that we're not going to have U.S. combat troops in Iraq again. And we are going to maintain that, because we should have learned a lesson from our long and immensely costly incursion in Iraq. And that is that our military is so effective that we can keep a lid on problems

wherever we are, if we put enough personnel and resources into it. But it can only last if the people in these countries themselves are able to arrive at the kinds of political accommodations and compromise that any civilized society requires.

And so it would be, I think, a big mistake for us to think that we can, on the cheap, simply go in, tamp everything down again, restart without some fundamental shift in attitudes among the various Iraqi factions. That's why it is so important to have an Iraqi Government on the ground that is taking responsibility that we can help, that we can partner with, that has the capacity to get alliances in the region. And once that's in place, then I think we end up being one of many countries that can work together to deal with the broader crisis that ISIL poses.

What were your other questions? Did we underestimate ISIL? I think that there is no doubt that their advance, their movement over the last several months has been more rapid than the intelligence estimates and, I think, the expectations of policymakers both in and outside of Iraq. And part of that is, I think, not a full appreciation of the degree to which the Iraqi security forces, when they're far away from Baghdad, did not have the incentive or the capacity to hold ground against an aggressive adversary. And so that's one more reason why Iraqi Government formation is so important, because there has to be a rebuilding and an understanding of who it is that the Iraqi security forces are reporting to, what they are fighting for. And there has to be some investment by Sunnis in pushing back against ISIL.

I don't—I think we're already seeing—and we will see even further—the degree to which those territories under ISIL control alienate populations, because of the barbarity and brutality with which they operate. But in order to ensure that Sunni populations reject outright these kinds of incursions, they've got to feel like they're invested in a broader national government. And right now they don't feel that.

So the upshot is that what we've seen over the last several months indicates the weaknesses in an Iraqi Government. But what we've also seen I think is a wakeup call for a lot of Iraqis inside of Baghdad recognizing that we're going to have to rethink how we do business if we're going to hold our country together. And hopefully, that change in attitude supplemented by improved security efforts in which we can assist and help, that can make a difference. Yes.

U.S. Military Role in Iraq/Formation of New Government in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, you just expressed confidence that the Iraqi Government can eventually prevent a safe haven. But you've also just described the complications with the Iraqi Government and the sophistication of ISIL. So is it possible that what you've described and your ambitions there could take years, not months?

The President. I don't think we're going to solve this problem in weeks, if that's what you mean. I think this is going to take some time. The Iraqi security forces, in order to mount an offensive and be able to operate effectively with the support of populations in Sunni areas, are going to have to revamp, get resupplied, have a clearer strategy. That's all going to be dependent on a government that the Iraqi people and the Iraqi military have confidence in. We can help in all those efforts.

I think part of what we're able to do right now is to preserve a space for them to do the hard work that's necessary. If they do that, the one thing that I also think has changed is that many of the Sunni countries in the region who have been generally suspicious or wary of the Iraqi Government are more likely to join in, in the fight against ISIS, and that can be extremely helpful. But this is going to be a long-term project.

Part of what we've seen is that a minority Sunni population in Iraq, as well as a majority Sunni population in Syria, has felt dissatisfied and detached and alienated from their respective governments. And that has been a ripe territory for these jihadists and extremists to operate. And rebuilding governance in those areas and legitimacy for stable, moderate governing in those areas is going to take time.

Now, there are some immediate concerns that we have to worry about. We have to make sure that ISIL is not engaging in the actions

that could cripple a country permanently. There's key infrastructure inside of Iraq that we have to be concerned about. My team has been vigilant, even before ISIL went into Mosul, about foreign fighters and jihadists gathering in Syria and now in Iraq, who might potentially launch attacks outside the region against Western targets and U.S. targets. So there's going to be a counterterrorism element that we are already preparing for and have been working diligently on for a long time now.

There is going to be a military element in protecting our people, but the long-term campaign of changing that environment so that the millions of Sunnis who live in these areas feel connected to and well served by a national government, that's a long-term process. And that's something that the United States cannot do, only the Iraqi people themselves can do. We can help, we can advise, but we can't do it for them. And the U.S. military cannot do it for them.

And so this goes back to the earlier question about U.S. military involvement. The nature of this problem is not one that a U.S. military can solve. We can assist and our military obviously can play an extraordinarily important role in bolstering efforts of a Iraqi partner as they make the right steps to keep their country together, but we can't do it for them.

Okay? Last question.

Funding of U.S. Military Operations in Iraq

Q. Mr. President——

Q. America has spent $800 billion in Iraq. Do you anticipate having to ask Congress for additional funds to support this mission?

The President. Currently, we are operating within the budget constraints that we already have. And we'll have to evaluate what happens over time. We already have a lot of assets in the region. We anticipate, when we make our preliminary budgets, that there may be things that come up requiring us to engage. And right now, at least, I think we are okay.

If and when we need additional dollars to make sure that American personnel and American facilities are protected, then we will certainly make that request. But right now that's not our primary concern.

Last question.

U.S. Withdrawal of Combat Forces From Iraq/Afghanistan

Q. Mr. President, do you have any second thoughts about pulling all ground troops out of Iraq? And does it give you pause as the U.S. will—is it possible is it doing the same thing in Afghanistan?

The President. What I just find interesting is the degree to which this issue keeps on coming up, as if this was my decision. Under the previous administration, we had turned over the country to a sovereign, democratically elected Iraqi Government. In order for us to maintain troops in Iraq, we needed the invitation of the Iraqi Government, and we needed assurances that our personnel would be immune from prosecution if, for example, they were protecting themselves and ended up getting in a firefight with Iraqis, that they wouldn't be hauled before Iraqi—an Iraqi judicial system.

And the Iraqi Government, based on its political considerations, in part because Iraqis were tired of a U.S. occupation, declined to provide us those assurances. And on that basis, we left. We had offered to leave additional troops. So, when you hear people say, "Do you regret, Mr. President, not leaving more troops?," that presupposes that I would have overridden this sovereign government that we had turned the keys back over to and said, "You know what, you're democratic, you're sovereign, except if I decide that it's good for you to keep 10,000 or 15,000 or 25,000 marines in your country, you don't have a choice," which would have, kind of, run contrary to the entire argument we were making about turning over the country back to Iraqis, an argument not just made by me, but made by the previous administration.

So let's just be clear: The reason that we did not have a follow-on force in Iraq was because the Iraqis were—a majority of Iraqis did not want U.S. troops there, and politically, they could not pass the kind of laws that would be required to protect our troops in Iraq.

Having said all that, if in fact the Iraqi Government behaved the way it did over the last 5, 6 years, where it failed to pass legislation that would reincorporate Sunnis and give them a sense of ownership; if it had targeted certain Sunni leaders and jailed them; if it had alienated some of the Sunni tribes that we had brought back in during the so-called Awakening that helped us turn the tide in 2006—if they had done all those things and we had had troops there, the country wouldn't be holding together either. The only difference would be we'd have a bunch of troops on the ground that would be vulnerable. And however many troops we had, we would have to now be reinforcing, I'd have to be protecting them, and we'd have a much bigger job. And probably, we would end up having to go up again in terms of the number of grounds troops to make sure that those forces were not vulnerable.

So that entire analysis is bogus and is wrong, but gets frequently peddled around here by folks who oftentimes are trying to defend previous policies that they themselves made.

Going forward with respect to Afghanistan, we are leaving the follow-on force there. I think the lesson for Afghanistan is not the fact that we've got a follow-on force that will be capable of training and supporting Afghan security efforts. I think the real lesson in Afghanistan is that if factions in a country after a long period of civil war do not find a way to come up with a political accommodation; if they take maximalist positions and their attitude is, I want a hundred percent of what I want and the other side gets nothing, then the center doesn't hold.

And the good news is, is that in part thanks to the excellent work of John Kerry and others, we now are seeing the two candidates in the recent Presidential election start coming together and agreeing not only to move forward on the audit to be able to finally certify a winner in the election, but also the kinds of political accommodations that are going to be required to keep democracy moving.

So that's a real lesson I think for Afghan—for Afghanistan coming out of Iraq is, if you want this thing to work, then whether it's different ethnicities, different religions, different regions, they've got to accommodate each other; otherwise, you start tipping back into old patterns of violence. And it doesn't matter how many U.S. troops are there. If that happens, you end up having a mess. All right?

Thanks a lot, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Fuad Masum and Speaker of the Council of Representatives Salim al-Jabouri of Iraq; and Afghan Presidential candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), an alternative designation for the ISIL terrorist organization.

Remarks on the Situation in Iraq From Chilmark, Massachusetts
August 11, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody. I wanted to provide an update on recent developments in Iraq, including some important steps forward as Iraqis form a new Government.

Over the past few days, American forces have successfully conducted targeted airstrikes to prevent terrorist forces from advancing on the city of Erbil and to protect American civilians there. Kurdish forces on the ground continue to defend their city, and we've stepped up military advice and assistance to Iraqi and Kurdish forces as they wage the fight against ISIL.

At the same time, we've continued our daily humanitarian efforts to provide lifesaving assistance to the men, women, and children stranded on Mount Sinjar and deployed a USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team to help. Some have begun to escape their perch on that mountain, and we're working with international partners to develop options to bring them to safety. I want to thank in particular the United

Kingdom, France, and other countries working with us to provide much needed assistance to the Iraqi people. And meanwhile, our aircraft remain positioned to strike any terrorist forces around the mountain who threaten the safety of these families.

This advances the limited military objectives we've outlined in Iraq: protecting American citizens, providing advice and assistance to Iraqi forces as they battle these terrorists, and joining with international partners to provide humanitarian aid. But as I said when I authorized these operations, there is no American military solution to the larger crisis in Iraq. The only lasting solution is for Iraqis to come together and form an inclusive Government, one that represents the legitimate interests of all Iraqis and one that can unify the country's fight against ISIL.

Today Iraq took a promising step forward in this critical effort. Last month, the Iraqi people named a new President. Today President Masum named a new Prime Minister-designate, Dr. Haider al-Abadi. Under the Iraqi Constitution, this is an important step towards forming a new Government that can unite Iraq's different communities.

Earlier today Vice President Biden and I called Dr. Abadi to congratulate him and to urge him to form a new Cabinet as quickly as possible, one that's inclusive of all Iraqis and one that represents all Iraqis. I pledged our support to him, as well as to President Masum and Speaker Jabouri, as they work together to form this Government. Meanwhile, I urge all Iraqi political leaders to work peacefully through the political process in the days ahead.

Now, this new Iraqi leadership has a difficult task. It has to regain the confidence of its citizens by governing inclusively and by taking steps to demonstrate its resolve. The United States stands ready to support a Government that addresses the needs and grievances of all Iraqi people. We are also ready to work with other countries in the region to deal with the humanitarian crises and counterterrorism challenge in Iraq. Mobilizing that support will be easier once this new Government is in place.

Now, these have been difficult days in Iraq, a country that's faced so many challenges in its recent history. And I'm sure that will—there will be difficult days ahead. But just as the United States will remain vigilant against the threat posed to our people by ISIL, we stand ready to partner with Iraq in its fight against these terrorist forces. Without question, that effort will be advanced if Iraqis continue to build on today's progress and come together to support a new and inclusive Government.

Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:08 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Tisbury, Massachusetts

August 11, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Well, first of all, can we all thank Roger and Linda for this unbelievable setting? This is absolutely gorgeous. And I understand that we also have some outstanding young musicians from the Berklee School. So let's give them a big round of applause. Thank you very much.

Two other hotshots we've got here. First of all, those of you from Massachusetts, your own Ed Markey. Thank you for the outstanding work that you do every single day. And Michael Bennet, one of the finest public servants we have out of Colorado, also has the challenging, but fulfilling tasking of heading up—[*laughter*]—or enormously gratifying task up heading up the DSCC. Please give Michael a big round of applause.

So I've got a lot of old friends here, in addition to Linda and Roger, so I'm not going to give a long speech at the front end. On a day

like today, in a setting like this, I think a conversation works better. I'll just make a couple of points.

First of all, it's really wonderful to be at Martha's Vineyard, especially when the weather is this good. And Michelle and the girls are having a wonderful time. And we were hanging out with some seals this afternoon who came by and said hello. I found, as somebody from Hawaii, the water is still a little cold. [*Laughter*] But it couldn't have been nicer.

Obviously, we are at a very challenging time. When I first came into office, the big challenges were economic. And we were still in the midst of two wars, but we also had an immediate crisis where the financial system had melted down and that it affected Main Street in all sorts of ways. People were losing homes, losing jobs. It wasn't clear where the bottom was going to be. And we had to act quickly. And as a consequence of the resilience and the strength of the American people, but also some good decisions that we made early on and the help of a strong Democratic Senate, we were able to right the ship.

And if you think about where we are now economically compared to where we were when I first came into office, we were then losing 800,000 jobs a months. We now are seeing the lowest unemployment claim since 2006, the largest drop this past year in unemployment in 30 years. We've seen the deficit cut by more than half. We've seen the stock market rise so that people fully recovered their 401(k)s. We've seen corporate profits booming. Our energy production at unprecedented levels. Solar production 10 times what it was when I came into office; wind power 3 times what it was when I came into office. We've reduced our carbon by more than any nation on Earth. The housing market has recovered. And it's worth noting that we also have several million people who didn't have health care before that now have affordable care that they can count on, and they're not going to go bankrupt just because they got sick.

So, in all sorts of ways, we are not just stronger than when we—where we were when I first came into office. It's fair to say that America has the best cards when you look at other countries around the world. There's no other country you'd rather be than the United States. We are best positioned. And what will determine success in the 21st century is all the stuff that we're best at: knowledge, innovation. For the first time in 10 years, international investors now say the number-one place to invest is no longer China again; it's the United States of America. Because they recognize that when you combine our incredible natural resources with a system—an economic system as dynamic as ours and the incredible talents of our people, nobody can compete with us when we're making the right decisions.

But obviously, our economy doesn't work in isolation. And we also are seeing around the world incredible challenges, many of them all coming to a head at the same time. The Middle East is just one of the major challenges we have. And before I came here, I had a chance to speak to the Prime Minister-designate of Iraq. I'm hopeful that now we have the opportunity to form a Government in Iraq that can be an effective partner for us, but more importantly, can form the kind of broad, inclusive Government that serves as a basis for them to repel the terrorist movement, ISIL, that has been sweeping across the country.

But at the same time, we also have problems in Ukraine that we're having to deal with. Obviously, the situation in Israel and Gaza is something that we've all been watching and deeply concerned about and engaged with.

I do want to point out, though, at a time when the news seems filled with news of Ukraine and Gaza and Ebola and you name it, that in every instance people are constantly interested in finding out how can America help solve these problems. And there's a reason for that. Because despite the complaints and the second-guessing and the anti-American sentiment that you hear sometimes on television around the globe, when there's an actual problem they all recognize we're the one indispensable nation. They all recognize that our leadership is absolutely critical. And that's true both for challenges and opportunities.

The truth of the matter is, is that as challenging as some of the problems are around the globe, what we're also seeing is unprecedented engagement in Asia, and our alliances have never been stronger there. What we're also seeing is, in Latin America, when I came into office there was a sense that somehow Chavez and other demagogues were going to be setting the agenda there. No longer. Now they all recognize that partnering with us is best for their people and the future of their children and their grandchildren.

In Africa, we just recently had an incredible summit—unprecedented—50 world leaders who came. All of them just thrilled to be finding ways in which they can work with us to provide electricity to people who have never had it before, to grow crops that they haven't been able to grow before, to feed themselves, to create commercial partnerships.

And so I guess the point is this: that in the same way that through persistence and a steady hand we've been able to guide ourselves out of the economic crisis that we were in 5 years ago, I have no doubt that we're going to be able to guide the world, as a country, through some of the rockier times that we're going through internationally. But all of that requires some seriousness in Washington.

And I think it's fair to say that the one area where we haven't seen as much improvement as I would have liked is getting a Congress that is focused not on the next election, but on the next generation; that is serious about how do we grow an economy so that middle class folks and folks who want to get into the middle class have opportunity; how are we going to make sure that we take advantage of this incredible workforce that we have so that we're training them for the jobs of the future; how are we going to make sure that we're supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs in creating the new products and services for the next generation; how do we make sure that we deal with climate change in a serious way, so that our kids and our grandkids can enjoy the same kinds of beautiful, natural resources that we have today.

In each of these instances, we've got, unfortunately, a Congress that's not working. And I know it's fashionable to say, well, it's sort of a plague on both your houses, there's too much partisanship, there's too much ranker. Well, the truth of the matter is, is that there's no equivalence between what's going on. Democrats, I always say, we have our flaws. And there are times where Democrats drive me nuts. [*Laughter*] But if you look at the leadership of Democrats in both the House and the Senate, they're not ideological, they're not proposing radical solutions. They are common sense. They are pragmatic. And more often than not, they're willing to do things that are hard, even when it's not politically convenient. That's how we got health care passed. That's why we've been able to make progress on an issue like climate change. That's why we've been able to grow the economy and bring down the deficit.

And the decisions we make in terms of the investments of the future—for early childhood education or rebuilding our infrastructure—those are things that should be well in the mainstream of American thinking. And when you ask the American people, they think it makes sense.

What's preventing us from getting things done right now is you've got a faction within the Republican Party that thinks solely in terms of their own ideological purposes and solely in terms of how do they hang on to power. And that's a problem. And that's why I need a Democratic Senate. Not to mention the fact that we're going to have Supreme Court appointments, and there are going to be a whole host of issues that many people here care about that are going to be determined by whether or not Democrats retain the Senate.

So I just want to say thank you in advance for doing everything you do. The last point I'll make: Democrats, one of the flaws we've got is we are congenitally disposed towards not turning out during midterms elections. We get real excited about Presidential elections. We lose sight of the importance of elections in the midterm. Part of that is demographics. We're younger, more minorities vote Democratic,

more single women—a lot of folks who oftentimes do not turn out during midterms. But we know how to fix that as long as we continue to have your support.

So I would just ask all of you to feel the same sense of urgency about this midterm election as you would in a Presidential election. Because what we're able to do over the next 2 years—help people have higher minimum wages and make sure that folks have family-friendly policies at their work place, making sure that childcare is affordable or early childhood is something that we invest in, or rebuilding our roads and our bridges and putting people back to work—all that is going to depend on whether or not we've got a Democratic Senate that's serious.

So I'm confident we can get it done, but we're going to need your help. And I'm glad you're here to show that support.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:05 p.m. at the residence of Roger H. Brown and Linda A. Mason. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister-designate Haider al-Abadi of Iraq. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of Robin Williams
August 11, 2014

Robin Williams was an airman, a doctor, a genie, a nanny, a president, a professor, a bangarang Peter Pan, and everything in between. But he was one of a kind. He arrived in our lives as an alien, but he ended up touching every element of the human spirit. He made us laugh. He made us cry. He gave his immeasurable talent freely and generously to those who needed it most, from our troops stationed abroad to the marginalized on our own streets. The Obama family offers our condolences to Robin's family, his friends, and everyone who found their voice and their verse thanks to Robin Williams.

Statement on the Death of Michael Brown, Jr.
August 12, 2014

The death of Michael Brown is heartbreaking, and Michelle and I send our deepest condolences to his family and his community at this very difficult time. As Attorney General Holder has indicated, the Department of Justice is investigating the situation along with local officials, and they will continue to direct resources to the case as needed. I know the events of the past few days have prompted strong passions, but as details unfold, I urge everyone in Ferguson, Missouri, and across the country, to remember this young man through reflection and understanding. We should comfort each other and talk with one another in a way that heals, not in a way that wounds. Along with our prayers, that's what Michael and his family, and our broader American community, deserve.

NOTE: The statement referred to Michael Brown, who was shot by a police officer in Ferguson, MO, on August 9.

Remarks in Edgartown, Massachusetts
August 14, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody. This sound system's really powerful. Today I'd like to update the American people on two issues that I've been monitoring closely these last several days.

First of all, we continue to make progress in carrying out our targeted military operations in Iraq. Last week, I authorized two limited missions: protecting our people and facilities inside of Iraq and a humanitarian operation to help save thousands of Iraqi civilians stranded on a mountain.

A week ago, we assessed that many thousands of Yazidi men, women, and children had abandoned their positions to take refuge on Mount Sinjar in a desperate attempt to avoid slaughter. We also knew that ISIL terrorists were killing and enslaving Yazidi civilians in their custody and laying siege to the mountain. Without food or water, they faced a terrible choice: starve on the mountain or be slaughtered on the ground. That's when America came to help.

Over the last week, the U.S. military conducted humanitarian air drops every night, delivering more than 114,000 meals and 35,000 gallons of fresh water. We were joined in that effort by the United Kingdom, and other allies pledged their support. Our military was able to successfully strike ISIL targets around the mountain, which improved conditions for civilians to evacuate the mountain safely.

Yesterday a small team of Americans—military and civilian—completed their review of the conditions on the mountain. They found that food and water have been reaching those in need and that thousands of people have been evacuating safely each and every night. The civilians who remain continue to leave, aided by Kurdish forces and Yazidis who are helping to facilitate the safe passage of their families. So the bottom line is, is that the situation on the mountain has greatly improved, and Americans should be very proud of our efforts.

Because of the skill and professionalism of our military—and the generosity of our people—we broke the ISIL siege of Mount Sinjar, we helped vulnerable people reach safety, and we helped save many innocent lives. Because of these efforts, we do not expect there to be an additional operation to evacuate people off the mountain, and it's unlikely that we're going to need to continue humanitarian air drops on the mountain. The majority of the military personnel who conducted the assessment will be leaving Iraq in the coming days. And I just want to say that as Commander in Chief, I could not be prouder of the men and women of our military who carried out this humanitarian operation almost flawlessly. I'm very grateful to them, and I know that those who were trapped on that mountain are extraordinarily grateful as well.

Now, the situation remains dire for Iraqis subjected to ISIL's terror throughout the country, and this includes minorities like Yazidis and Iraqi Christians; it also includes many Sunnis, Shia, and Kurds. We're going to be working with our international partners to provide humanitarian assistance to those who are suffering in northern Iraq wherever we have capabilities and we can carry out effective missions like the one we carried out on Mount Sinjar without committing combat troops on the ground.

We obviously feel a great urge to provide some humanitarian relief to the situation, and I've been very encouraged by the interest of our international partners in helping on these kinds of efforts as well. We will continue air strikes to protect our people and facilities in Iraq. We have increased the delivery of military assistance to Iraqi and Kurdish forces fighting ISIL on the front lines.

And, perhaps most importantly, we are urging Iraqis to come together to turn the tide against ISIL—above all, by seizing the enormous opportunity of forming a new, inclusive Government under the leadership of Prime Minister-designate Abadi. I had a chance to speak to Prime Minister-designate Abadi a few days ago, and he spoke about the need for the kind of inclusive Government, a Government that speaks to all the people of Iraq, that is needed right now. He still has a challenging task in putting a Government together, but we are modestly hopeful that the Iraqi Government situation is moving in the right direction.

Now, second, I want to address something that's been in the news over the last couple of days, and that's the situation in Ferguson, Missouri. I know that many Americans have been

deeply disturbed by the images we've seen in the heartland of our country, as police have clashed with people protesting. Today I'd like us all to take a step back and think about how we're going to be moving forward.

This morning I received a thorough update on the situation from Attorney General Eric Holder, who has been following it and been in communication with his team. I've already tasked the Department of Justice and the FBI to independently investigate the death of Michael Brown, along with local officials on the ground.

The Department of Justice is also consulting with local authorities about ways that they can maintain public safety without restricting the right of peaceful protest and while avoiding unnecessary escalation. I made clear to the Attorney General that we should do what is necessary to help determine exactly what happened and to see that justice is done.

I also just spoke with Governor Jay Nixon of Missouri. I expressed my concern over the violent turn that events have taken on the ground and underscored that now is the time for all of us to reflect on what's happened and to find a way to come together going forward. He is going to be traveling to Ferguson. He is a good man and a fine Governor, and I'm confident that, working together, he is going to be able to communicate his desire to make sure that justice is done and his desire to make sure that public safety is maintained in an appropriate way.

Of course, it's important to remember how this started. We lost a young man, Michael Brown, in heartbreaking and tragic circumstances. He was 18 years old. His family will never hold Michael in their arms again. And when something like this happens, the local authorities, including the police, have a responsibility to be open and transparent about how they are investigating that death and how they are protecting the people in their communities.

There is never an excuse for violence against police or for those who would use this tragedy as a cover for vandalism or looting. There's also no excuse for police to use excessive force against peaceful protests or to throw protesters in jail for lawfully exercising their First Amendment rights. And here, in the United States of America, police should not be bullying or arresting journalists who are just trying to do their jobs and report to the American people on what they see on the ground. Put simply, we all need to hold ourselves to a high standard, particularly those of us in positions of authority.

I know that emotions are raw right now in Ferguson, and there are certainly passionate differences about what has happened. There are going to be different accounts of how this tragedy occurred. There are going to be differences in terms of what needs to happen going forward. That's part of our democracy. But let's remember that we're all part of one American family. We are united in common values, and that includes belief in equality under the law; a basic respect for public order and the right to peaceful public protest; a reverence for the dignity of every single man, woman, and child among us; and the need for accountability when it comes to our government.

So now is the time for healing. Now is the time for peace and calm on the streets of Ferguson. Now is the time for an open and transparent process to see that justice is done. And I've asked that the Attorney General and the U.S. attorney on the scene continue to work with local officials to move that process forward. They will be reporting to me in the coming days about what's being done to make sure that happens.

Thanks very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:49 p.m. at the Edgartown School. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister-elect Haider al-Abadi of Iraq; Michael Brown, who was shot by a police officer in Ferguson, MO, on August 9; and Richard G. Callahan, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The President's Weekly Address
August 16, 2014

Hi, everybody. Over the next couple weeks, schools all across the country will be opening their doors. Students will suit up for fall sports and marching band and the school play; moms and dads will snap those first-day-of-school pictures, and that includes me and Michelle.

And so today I want to talk directly with students and parents about one of the most important things any of you can do this year, and that's to begin preparing yourself for an education beyond high school.

We know that in today's economy, whether you go to a 4-year college, a community college, or a professional training program, some higher education is the surest ticket to the middle class. A typical American with a bachelor's degree or higher earns over $28,000 more per year than someone with just a high school diploma. And they're also much more likely to have a job in the first place. The unemployment rate for those with a bachelor's degree is less than one-third of the rate for those without a high school diploma.

But for too many families across the country, paying for higher education is a constant struggle. Earlier this year, a young woman named Elizabeth Cooper wrote to tell me how hard it is for middle class families like hers to afford college. As she said, she feels "not significant enough to be addressed, not poor enough for people to worry [about], and not rich enough to be cared about."

Michelle and I know the feeling. We only finished paying off our student loans 10 years ago. And so, as President, I'm working to make sure young people like Elizabeth can go to college without racking up mountains of debt. We reformed a student loan system so that more money goes to students instead of big banks. We expanded grants and college tax credits for students and families. We took action to offer millions of students a chance to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their income. And Congress should pass a bill to let students refinance their loans at today's lower interest rates, just like their parents can refinance their mortgage.

But as long as college costs keep rising, we can't just keep throwing money at the problem. Colleges have to do their part to bring down costs as well. That's why we proposed a plan to tie Federal financial aid to a college's performance and create a new college scorecard so that students and parents can see which schools provide the biggest bang for your buck. We launched a new $75 million challenge to inspire colleges to reduce costs and raise graduation rates. And in January, more than a hundred college presidents and nonprofit leaders came to the White House and made commitments to increase opportunities for underserved students.

Since then, we've met with even more leaders who want to create new community-based partnerships and support school counselors. And this week, my Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, announced a series of commitments to support students who need a little extra academic help getting through college.

This is a challenge I take personally. And to all you young people, now that you're heading back to school, your education is something you have to take personally also. It's up to you to push yourself, to take hard classes and read challenging books. Science shows that when you struggle to solve a problem or make a new argument, you're actually forming new connections in your brain. So, when you're thinking hard, you're getting smarter, which means this year, challenge yourself to reach higher. And set your sights on college in the years ahead. Your country is counting on you.

And don't forget to have some fun along the way too.

Thanks everybody. Good luck on the year ahead.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:50 p.m. on August 8 in the State Dining Room at the White House for broadcast on August 16. In the address, the Presi-

dent referred to Elizabeth Cooper, student, University of Northern Colorado. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 15, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 16.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Commencement of United States Military Operations in Iraq
August 17, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On August 14, 2014, I authorized the U.S. Armed Forces to conduct targeted air strikes to support operations by Iraqi forces to recapture the Mosul Dam. These military operations will be limited in their scope and duration as necessary to support the Iraqi forces in their efforts to retake and establish control of this critical infrastructure site, as part of their ongoing campaign against the terrorist group the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The failure of the Mosul Dam could threaten the lives of large numbers of civilians, endanger U.S. personnel and facilities, including the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, and prevent the Iraqi government from providing critical services to the Iraqi populace. Pursuant to this authorization, on the evening of August 15, 2014, U.S. military forces commenced targeted airstrike operations in Iraq.

I have directed these actions, which are in the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. These actions are being undertaken in coordination with the Iraqi government.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks on the Situations in Iraq and Ferguson, Missouri, and an Exchange With Reporters
August 18, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Earlier today I received an update from my team on two separate issues that I've been following closely: our ongoing operation in Iraq and the situation in Ferguson, Missouri.

With respect to Iraq, we continue to see important progress across different parts of our strategy to support the Iraqi Government and combat the threat from the terrorist group ISIL. First, our military operations are effectively protecting our personnel and facilities in Iraq. Over the last 11 days, American airstrikes have stopped the ISIL advance around the city of Erbil and pushed back the terrorists. Meanwhile, we have urgently provided additional arms and assistance to Iraqi forces, including Kurdish and Iraqi security forces who are fighting on the front lines.

Today, with our support, Iraqi and Kurdish forces took a major step forward by recapturing the largest dam in Iraq near the city of Mosul. The Mosul Dam fell under terrorist control earlier this month and is directly tied to our objective of protecting Americans in Iraq. If that dam was breached, it could have proven catastrophic, with floods that would have threatened the lives of thousands of civilians and endanger our Embassy compound in

Baghdad. Iraqi and Kurdish forces took the lead on the ground and performed with courage and determination. So this operation demonstrates that Iraqi and Kurdish forces are capable of working together in taking the fight to ISIL. If they continue to do so, they will have the strong support of the United States of America.

Second, we're building an international coalition to address the humanitarian crisis in northern Iraq. Even as we've worked to help many thousands of Yazidis escape the siege of Mount Sinjar, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have been displaced by ISIL's violence, and many more are still at risk. Going forward, the United States will work with the Iraqi Government, as well as partners like the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Italy, and Australia, to get food and water to people in need and to bring long-term relief to people who have been driven from their homes.

Third, we will continue to pursue a long-term strategy to turn the tide against ISIL by supporting the new Iraqi Government and working with key partners in the region and beyond. Over the last week, we saw historic progress as Iraqis named a new Prime Minister-designate, Haider al-Abadi, and Iraq's outgoing Prime Minister Maliki agreed to step down. This peaceful transition of power will mark a major milestone in Iraq's political development, but as I think we're all aware, the work is not yet done.

Over the next few weeks, Dr. Abadi needs to complete the work of forming a new, broad-based, inclusive Iraqi Government, one that develops a national program to address the interests of all Iraqis. Without that progress, extremists like ISIL can continue to prey upon Iraq's divisions. With that new Government in place, Iraqis will be able to unite the country against the threat from ISIL, and they will be able to look forward to increased support not just from the United States, but from other countries in the region and around the world.

Let's remember, ISIL poses a threat to all Iraqis and to the entire region. They claim to represent Sunni grievances, but they slaughter Sunni men, women, and children. They claim to oppose foreign forces, but they actively recruit foreign fighters to advance their hateful ideology.

So the Iraqi people need to reject them and unite to begin to push them out of the lands that they've occupied, as we're seeing at Mosul Dam. And this is going to take time. There are going to be many challenges ahead. But meanwhile, there should be no doubt that the United States military will continue to carry out the limited missions that I've authorized: protecting our personnel and facilities in Iraq in both Erbil and Baghdad and providing humanitarian support, as we did on Mount Sinjar.

My administration has consulted closely with Congress about our strategy in Iraq, and we are going to continue to do so in the weeks to come, because when it comes to the security of our people and our efforts against a terrorist group like ISIL, we need to be united in our resolve.

I also want to address the situation in Ferguson, Missouri. Earlier this afternoon I spoke with Governor Nixon as well as Senators Roy Blunt and Claire McCaskill. I also met with Attorney General Eric Holder. The Justice Department has opened an independent Federal civil rights investigation into the death of Michael Brown. They are on the ground, and along with the FBI, they are devoting substantial resources to that investigation. The Attorney General himself will be traveling to Ferguson on Wednesday to meet with the FBI agents and DOJ personnel conducting the Federal criminal investigation, and he will receive an update from them on their progress. He will also be meeting with other leaders in the community, whose support is so critical to bringing about peace and calm in Ferguson.

Ronald Davis, the Director of the DOJ's Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services, or COPS, is also traveling to Ferguson tomorrow to work with police officials on the ground. We've also had experts from the DOJ's Community Relations Service working in Ferguson since the days after the shooting to foster conversations among local stakeholders and reduce tensions among the community.

So let me close just saying a few words about the tensions there. We have all seen images of protesters and law enforcement in the streets. It's clear that the vast majority of people are peacefully protesting. What's also clear is that a small minority of individuals are not. While I understand the passions and the anger that arise over the death of Michael Brown, giving into that anger by looting or carrying guns and even attacking the police only serves to raise tensions and stir chaos. It undermines rather than advancing justice.

Let me also be clear that our constitutional rights to speak freely, to assemble, and to report in the press must be vigilantly safeguarded, especially in moments like these. There's no excuse for excessive force by police or any action that denies people the right to protest peacefully. Ours is a nation of laws for the citizens who live under them and for the citizens who enforce them.

So to a community in Ferguson that is rightly hurting and looking for answers, let me call once again for us to seek some understanding rather than simply holler at each other. Let's seek to heal rather than to wound each other. As Americans, we've got to use this moment to seek out our shared humanity that's been laid bare by this moment: the potential of a young man and the sorrows of parents, the frustrations of a community, the ideals that we hold as one united American family.

I've said this before: In too many communities around the country, a gulf of mistrust exists between local residents and law enforcement. In too many communities, too many young men of color are left behind and seen only as objects of fear. Through initiatives like "My Brother's Keeper," I'm personally committed to changing both perception and reality. And already, we're making some significant progress, as people of good will of all races are ready to chip in. But that requires that we build and not tear down. And that requires we listen and not just shout. That's how we're going to move forward together, by trying to unite each other and understand each other and not simply divide ourselves from one another. We're going to have to hold tight to those values in the days ahead. That's how we bring about justice, and that's how we bring about peace.

So with that, I've got a few questions I'm going to take. I'm going to start with Jim Kuhnhenn of AP. Yes.

Militarization of Local Police Forces/Mobilization of National Guard Troops in Ferguson, Missouri

Q. Right here, Mr. President. The incident in Ferguson has led to a discussion about whether it's proper to militarize the Nation's city police forces, and I'm wondering whether you wonder or if you think that—you see that as a factor regarding the police response in Ferguson. And also, do you agree with the decision by the Governor to send in the National Guard?

The President. Well, I think one of the great things about the United States has been our ability to maintain a distinction between our military and domestic law enforcement. That helps preserve our civil liberties. That helps ensure that the military is accountable to civilian direction. And that has to be preserved.

After 9/11, I think understandably, a lot of folks saw local communities that were ill-equipped for a potential catastrophic terrorist attack, and I think people in Congress, people of good will, decided we've got to make sure that they get proper equipment to deal with threats that historically wouldn't arise in local communities. And some of that has been useful. I mean, some law enforcement didn't have radios that they could operate effectively in the midst of a disaster. Some communities needed to be prepared if in fact there was a chemical attack and they didn't have hazmat suits.

Having said that, I think it's probably useful for us to review how the funding has gone, how local law enforcement has used grant dollars, to make sure that what they're purchasing is stuff that they actually need, because there is a big difference between our military and our local law enforcement, and we don't want those lines blurred. That would be contrary to our traditions. And I think that there will be some bipartisan interest in reexamining some of those programs.

With respect to the National Guard, I think it's important just to remember, this was a State-activated National Guard, and so it's under the charge of the Governor. This is not something that we initiated at the Federal level. I spoke to Jay Nixon about this, expressed an interest in making sure that if in fact a National Guard is used, it is used in a limited and appropriate way. He described the support role that they're going to be providing to local law enforcement, and I'll be watching over the next several days to assess whether, in fact, it's helping rather than hindering progress in Ferguson.

Steve Holland, Reuters.

U.S. Military Role in Iraq/Formation of New Government in Iraq

Q. Thank you. How do you avoid mission creep in Iraq? And how long do you think it will take to contain ISIL?

The President. Well, I have been firm from the start that we are not reintroducing thousands of U.S. troops back on the ground to engage in combat. We're not the Iraqi military. We're not even the Iraqi air force. This is—I am the Commander in Chief of the United States Armed Forces, and Iraq is going to have to ultimately provide for its own security.

On the other hand, we've got a national security interest in making sure our people are protected and in making sure that a savage group that seems willing to slaughter people for no rhyme or reason other than they have not kowtowed to them, that a group like that is contained, because ultimately, it can pose a threat to us.

So my goal is, number one, to make sure we've got a viable partner. And that's why we have so consistently emphasized the need for a Government-formation process that is inclusive, that is credible, that is legitimate, and that can appeal to Sunnis as well as Shias and Kurds. We've made significant progress on that front, but we're not there yet. And I told my national security team today—and I will say publicly—that we want to continue to communicate to politicians of all stripes in Iraq: Don't think that because we have engaged in airstrikes to protect our people that now is the time to let the foot off the gas and return to the same kind of dysfunction that has so weakened the country generally.

Dr. Abadi has said the right things. I was impressed in my conversation with him about his vision for an inclusive Government. But they've got to get this done, because the wolf is at the door, and in order for them to be credible with the Iraqi people, they're going to have to put behind some of the old practices and actually create a credible, united Government.

When we see a credible Iraqi Government, we are then in a position to engage with planning not just with the Iraqi Government, but also with regional actors and folks beyond the Middle East so that we can craft the kind of joint strategy—joint counterterrorism strategy—that I discussed at West Point and I discussed several years ago at the National Defense College [University].* Our goal is to have effective partners on the ground. And if we have effective partners on the ground, mission creep is much less likely.

Typically, what happens with mission creep is when we start deciding that we're the ones who have to do it all ourselves. And that—because of the excellence of our military, that can work for a time. We learned that in Iraq. But it's not sustainable. It's not lasting. And so I've been very firm about this precisely because our goal here has to be to be able to build up a structure not just in Iraq, but regionally, that can be maintained, and that is not involving us effectively trying to govern or impose our military will on a country that is hostile to us. All right?

Q. How long to contain ISIL then? It sounds like a long-term project.

The President. Well, I don't think, Steve, at this point I'm prepared to provide a blanket answer to that. A lot of it depends on how effectively the Iraqi Government comes together. I think that you will see, if in fact that Gov-

* White House correction.

ernment-formation process moves rapidly and credibly, that there will be a lot of actors in the region and around the world that are prepared to help and to step up assistance, many of whom may have been reticent over the last several years because the perception was, at least, that Baghdad was not being inclusive and that it was going to be self-defeating to put more resources into it.

I think you'll see a lot of folks step up; suddenly, now Iraq will have a variety of partners. And with more folks unified around the effort, I think it's something that can be accomplished. It also means that there's the prospect of Sunni tribes, who are the primary residents of areas that ISIL now controls, saying we've got a viable option, and we would rather work with a central Government that appears to understand our grievances and is prepared to meet them rather than to deal with individuals who don't seem to have any values beyond death and destruction.

I'm going to take the last question from somebody who, after 41 years, I understand, has decided to retire. Ann Compton, everybody here knows, is not only the consummate professional, but is also just a pleasure to get to know. I was proud to be able to hug her grandbaby recently. And I suspect that may have something to do with her decision. But I just want to say publicly, Ann, we're going to miss you, and we're very, very proud of the extraordinary career and work that you've done, and we hope you're not a stranger around here, so——

ABC News White House Correspondent Ann Compton. Thank you very much.

The President. Ann Compton. [*Applause*]

Ms. Compton. Thank you.

The President. I suspect you may get some cake at some point. [*Laughter*]

Department of Justice Investigation of Shooting in Ferguson, Missouri/"My Brother's Keeper" Initiative/Racial Disparities in Criminal Justice System/Violence Committed by Protesters in Ferguson, Missouri

Ms. Compton. Let me ask you, this is an interesting time in your Presidency. And one of the things that you have so emphasized in the last few months, the last year or so, is this reach out to brothers—"My Brother's Keeper" and to a generation that doesn't feel that it has much chance. Sending the Attorney General to Ferguson is a step. Has anyone there asked you or have you considered going yourself? Is there more that you personally could do not just for Ferguson, but for communities that might also feel that kind of tension and see it erupt in the way it has in Ferguson?

The President. Well, Ann, obviously, we've seen events in which there's a big gulf between community perceptions and law enforcement perceptions around the country. This is not something new. It's always tragic when it involves the death of someone so young.

I have to be very careful about not prejudging these events before investigations are completed because, although these are issues of local jurisdiction, the DOJ works for me, and when they're conducting an investigation, I've got to make sure that I don't look like I'm putting my thumb on the scales one way or the other. So it's hard for me to address a specific case beyond making sure that it's conducted in a way that is transparent, where there's accountability, where people can trust the process, hoping that as a consequence of a fair and just process, you end up with a fair and just outcome.

But as I think I've said on—in some past occasions, part of the ongoing challenge of perfecting our Union has involved dealing with communities that feel left behind, who, as a consequence of tragic histories, often find themselves isolated, often find themselves without hope, without economic prospects. You have young men of color in many communities who are more likely to end up in jail or in the criminal justice system than they are in a good job or in college. And part of my job that I can do, I think, without any potential conflicts is to get at those root causes.

Now, that's a big project. It's one that we've been trying to carry out now for a couple of centuries. And we've made extraordinary progress, but we have not made enough progress. And so the idea behind something like "My

Brother's Keeper" is, can we work with cities and communities and clergy and parents and young people themselves all across the country, school superintendents, businesses, corporations, and can we find models that work that move these young men on a better track?

Now, part of that process is also looking at our criminal justice system to make sure that it is upholding the basic principle of everybody is equal before the law.

And one of the things that we've looked at during the course of where we can—during the course of investigating where we can make a difference is that there are patterns that start early. Young African American and Hispanic boys tend to get suspended from school at much higher rates than other kids, even when they're in elementary school. They tend to have much more frequent interactions with the criminal justice system at an earlier age. Sentencing may be different. How trials are conducted may be different. And so one of the things that we've done is to include the Department of Justice in this conversation under the banner of "My Brother's Keeper" to see where can we start working with local communities to inculcate more trust, more confidence in the criminal justice system.

And I want to be clear about this, because sometimes, I think there's confusion around these issues, and this dates back for decades. There are young Black men that commit crime. And we can argue about why that happened, because of the poverty they were born into and the lack of opportunity, or the schools systems that failed them, or what have you. But if they commit a crime, then they need to be prosecuted, because every community has an interest in public safety. And if you go into the African American community or the Latino community, some of the folks who are most intent on making sure that criminals are dealt with are people who have been preyed upon by them.

So this is not an argument that there isn't real crime out there and that law enforcement doesn't have a difficult job and that they have to be honored and respected for the danger and difficulty of law enforcement. But what is also true is that given the history of this country, where we can make progress in building up more confidence, more trust, making sure that our criminal justice system is acutely aware of the possibilities of disparities in treatment, there are safeguards in place to avoid those disparities, where training and assistance is provided to local law enforcement who may just need more information in order to avoid potential disparity—all those things can make a difference.

One of the things I was most proud of when I was in the State legislature—way back when I had no gray hair and none of you could pronounce my name—was, I passed legislation requiring videotaping of interrogations and confessions, and I passed legislation dealing with racial profiling in Illinois. And in both cases, we worked with local law enforcement. And the argument was that you can do a better job as a law enforcement official if you have built up credibility and trust. And there are some basic things that can be done to promote that kind of trust. And in some cases, there's just a lack of information, and we want to make sure that we get that information to law enforcement.

So there are things that can be done to improve the situation. But short term, obviously, right now what we have to do is to make sure that the cause of justice and fair administration of the law is being brought to bear in Ferguson. In order to do that, we've got to make sure that we are able to distinguish between peaceful protesters who may have some legitimate grievances and maybe longstanding grievances and those who are using this tragic death as an excuse to engage in criminal behavior and tossing Molotov cocktails or looting stores. And that is a small minority of folks and may not even be residents of Ferguson, but they are damaging the cause, they're not advancing it.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:27 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Brown, who was shot by a police officer in Ferguson, MO, on August 9, and his par-

ents Michael Brown, Sr., and Lesley McSpadden. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Statement on the Death of Former Senator James M. Jeffords
August 18, 2014

Michelle and I send our deepest sympathies to the family of Senator James M. Jeffords on his passing. Jim devoted his life to service, as a naval officer, a local leader in his hometown of Shrewsbury, and eventually as a U.S. Senator representing his beloved Vermont. During his more than 30 years in Washington, Jim never lost the fiercely independent spirit that made Vermonters—and people across America—trust and respect him. Whatever the issue—whether it was protecting the environment, supporting Americans with disabilities, or whether to authorize the war in Iraq—Jim voted his principles, even if it sometimes meant taking a lonely or unpopular stance. Vermonters sent him to Washington to follow his conscience, and he did them proud.

Our prayers are with the Jeffords family, including his son Leonard and daughter Laura. And we're grateful to Jim for his legacy of service to Vermont and the United States of America.

Statement on the Elimination of Syria's Declared Chemical Weapons Stockpile
August 18, 2014

Today we mark an important achievement in our ongoing effort to counter the spread of weapons of mass destruction by eliminating Syria's declared chemical weapons stockpile. The most lethal declared chemical weapons possessed by the Syrian regime were destroyed by dedicated U.S. civilian and military professionals using a unique American capability aboard the MV *Cape Ray,* and they did so aboard that U.S. vessel several weeks ahead of schedule.

This is a major milestone in the international community's efforts under the leadership of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to rid the Syrian regime of its chemical weapons. It further advances our collective goal to ensure that the Asad regime cannot use its chemical arsenal against the Syrian people and sends a clear message that the use of these abhorrent weapons has consequences and will not be tolerated by the international community.

We are grateful to the United Nations-OPCW Joint Mission and the entire international coalition for their unprecedented achievements. In particular, we appreciate the dedication of Joint Mission Special Coordinator Sigrid Kaag, OPCW Director General Uzümcü, and their teams for their vital work. We also thank our close allies and partners—Denmark, Norway, Italy, Finland, Germany, and the United Kingdom—for their key contributions to this mission, and we appreciate the assistance of Russia and China. Going forward, we will watch closely to see that Syria fulfills its commitment to destroy its remaining declared chemical weapons production facilities. In addition, serious questions remain with respect to the omissions and discrepancies in Syria's declaration to the OPCW and about continued allegations of use. These concerns must be addressed, and we will work closely with the OPCW and the international community to seek resolution of these open issues, even as we broadly press the Asad regime to end the horrific atrocities it continues to commit against its people.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

Remarks on the Death of James W. Foley in Syria From Edgartown, Massachusetts

August 20, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody. Today the entire world is appalled by the brutal murder of Jim Foley by the terrorist group ISIL.

Jim was a journalist, a son, a brother, and a friend. He reported from difficult and dangerous places, bearing witness to the lives of people a world away. He was taken hostage nearly 2 years ago in Syria, and he was courageously reporting at the time on the conflict there.

Jim was taken from us in an act of violence that shocks the conscience of the entire world. He was 40 years old, one of five siblings, the son of a mom and dad who worked tirelessly for his release. Earlier today I spoke to the Foleys and told them that we are all heartbroken at their loss and join them in honoring Jim and all that he did.

Now, Jim Foley's life stands in stark contrast to his killers. Let's be clear about ISIL. They have rampaged across cities and villages, killing innocent, unarmed civilians in cowardly acts of violence. They abduct women and children and subject them to torture and rape and slavery. They have murdered Muslims—both Sunni and Shia—by the thousands. They target Christians and religious minorities, driving them from their homes, murdering them when they can, for no other reason than they practice a different religion. They declared their ambition to commit genocide against an ancient people.

So ISIL speaks for no religion. Their victims are overwhelmingly Muslim, and no faith teaches people to massacre innocents. No just God would stand for what they did yesterday and for what they do every single day. ISIL has no ideology of any value to human beings. Their ideology is bankrupt. They may claim out of expediency that they are at war with the United States or the West, but the fact is, they terrorize their neighbors and offer them nothing but an endless slavery to their empty vision and the collapse of any definition of civilized behavior.

And people like this ultimately fail. They fail because the future is won by those who build and not destroy and the world is shaped by people like Jim Foley and the overwhelming majority of humanity who are appalled by those who killed him.

The United States of America will continue to do what we must do to protect our people. We will be vigilant, and we will be relentless. When people harm Americans anywhere, we do what's necessary to see that justice is done. And we act against ISIL, standing alongside others.

The people of Iraq, who with our support are taking the fight to ISIL, must continue coming together to expel these terrorists from their communities. The people of Syria, whose story Jim Foley told, do not deserve to live under the shadow of a tyrant or terrorists. They have our support in their pursuit of a future rooted in dignity.

From governments and peoples across the Middle East, there has to be a common effort to extract this cancer so that it does not spread. There has to be a clear rejection of these kind of nihilistic ideologies. One thing we can all agree on is that a group like ISIL has no place in the 21st century.

Friends and allies around the world, we share a common security and a common set of values that are rooted in the opposite of what we saw yesterday. And we will continue to confront this hateful terrorism and replace it with a sense of hope and civility. That's what Jim Foley stood for, a man who lived his work, who courageously told the stories of his fellow human beings, who was liked and loved by friends and family.

Today the American people will all say a prayer for those who loved Jim. All of us feel the ache of his absence. All of us mourn his loss. We keep in our prayers those other Americans who are separated from their families. We will do everything that we can to protect our people and the timeless values that we stand for.

May God bless and keep Jim's memory, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:52 p.m. at the Edgartown School. In his remarks, he referred to James W. Foley, a freelance journalist who was killed by members of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization on August 19, and his parents John and Diane Foley; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

The President's Weekly Address
August 23, 2014

Hi, everybody. Nearly 6 years after the worst financial crisis of our lifetimes, our businesses have added nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 53 months. That's the longest streak of private sector job creation in our history. And we're in a 6-month streak with our economy creating at least 200,000 new jobs each month, the first time that's happened since 1997.

Thanks to the decisions we made to rescue and rebuild our economy, and your hard work and resilience, America is leading again. Areas like manufacturing, energy, technology, and autos are all booming. And here's the thing: We're selling more goods made in America to the rest of the world than ever before. American exports are at an alltime high.

Over the past 5 years, we've worked hard to open new markets for our businesses and to help them compete on a level playing field in those markets. And we've broken records for exports 4 years running. Last year, our exports supported more than 11 million American jobs, about 1.6 million more than when I took office. They're good jobs that typically pay about 15 percent more than the national average. And more small businesses are selling their goods abroad than ever before, nearly 300,000 last year alone.

We should be doing everything we can to accelerate this progress, not stall it.

One place to start is by supporting something called the U.S. Export-Import Bank. Its sole mission is to create American jobs. That's it. It helps many American entrepreneurs take that next step and take their small business global. But next month, its charter will expire—unless Members of Congress do their job and reauthorize it.

Now, past Congresses have done this 16 times, always with support from both parties. Republican and Democratic Presidents have supported the bank too. This time around shouldn't be any different. Because the bank works. It's independent. It pays for itself. But if Congress fails to act, thousands of businesses, large and small, that sell their products abroad will take a completely unnecessary hit.

Small-business owners have had to overcome a lot these past several years. We all saw local businesses close their doors during the crisis. And in the past few years, we've seen more and more open their doors and do their part to help lead America's comeback. At the very least, they deserve a Congress that doesn't stand in the way of their success.

Your Members of Congress are home this month. If you're a small-business owner or an employee at a large business that depends on financing to tackle new markets and create new jobs, tell them to quit treating your business like it's expendable and start treating it for what it is: vital to America's success. Tell them to do their jobs: Keep America's exports growing, and keep America's recovery going.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:05 p.m. on August 18 in the Blue Room at the White House for broadcast on August 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 22, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 23.

Remarks at the American Legion National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina

August 26, 2014

The President. Thank you so much. Please, everybody, have a seat. Hello, Legionnaires!

Audience members. Hello!

The President. I want to thank Commander Dellinger for the introduction, but more importantly, for your service in the Army. And as you conclude your tenure as commander, thank you for your tireless commitment to America's veterans.

I want to thank the entire leadership team for welcoming me here today, including your national adjutant, Dan Wheeler; your executive director in Washington, Peter Gaytan; Nancy Brown-Park, all the spouses, daughters—[*applause*]—hey!—sisters of the Auxiliary; and the Sons of the American Legion. And let me say that I join you in honoring the memory of a friend to many of you, an Army veteran and a great Legionnaire from North Carolina, Jerry Hedrick.

To Senators Richard Burr and Kay Hagan, Mayor Dan Clodfelter: Thank you for welcoming us to the great State of North Carolina and to Charlotte and for your great support of our troops and our veterans.

And I do have to mention the presence of Boys Nation, Matthew Ellow, from Lacey's Spring, Alabama. I welcomed Matthew and all the incredible young people of Boys and Girls Nation to the White House last month. I was running a little bit late, so they just started singing, filling the White House with patriotic songs. And then they sang Happy Birthday to me, so I was pretty moved. And they're a tribute to the Legion and to our country.

Now, I brought with me today our new Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Bob McDonald. And for those of you who are not aware, Bob is one of America's most accomplished business leaders. He comes from a military family. He excelled at West Point, served as an Army Airborne Ranger, so he's got a reputation for jumping into tough situations. [*Laughter*] And he's hit the ground running, visiting hospitals and clinics across the country, hearing directly from veterans and helping us change the way VA does business. And by the way, Washington doesn't agree on much these days, but he got confirmed 97 to 0. People understand he's the right man for the job. He has my full support. And, Bob, I want to thank you for once again serving your country.

It's an honor to be back with the American Legion. In the story of your service, we see the spirit of America. When your country needed you most, you stepped forward. You raised your right hand; you swore a solemn oath. You put on that uniform and earned the title you carry to this day, whether soldier, sailor, airman, marine, coastguardsman.

Among you are proud veterans of World War II, of Korea, of Vietnam, of Desert Storm and the Balkans, and our newest veterans, from Iraq and Afghanistan. Across the generations, you served with honor. You made us proud. And you carry the memory of friends who never came home: our fallen, our prisoners of war, those missing in action, heroes that our Nation can never forget.

When you took off that uniform, you earned another title, the title of veteran. And you never stopped serving. As Legionnaires, you put on that cap, wore that emblem—"for God and country"—and took care of one another, making sure our veterans receive the care and the benefits that you've earned and deserve.

And just as you defended America over there, you helped build America here at home, as leaders and role models in your communities, as entrepreneurs and business owners, as champions for a strong national defense. You helped the United States of America become what we are today: the greatest democratic, economic, and military force for freedom and human dignity that the world has ever known.

Now, these are challenging times. I don't have to tell you that. Around the world as well as here at home. You turn on the TV, and we're saturated with heartbreaking images of war and senseless violence and terrorism and trage-

dy. And it can be easy to grow cynical or give in to the sense that the future we seek is somehow beyond our reach. But as men and women who have been tested like few others, you should know better. You know that cynicism is not the character of a great nation. And so, even as we face, yes, the hard tasks of our time, we should never lose sight of our progress as a people or the strength of our leadership in the world.

Think about it. Six years after the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression—in some ways, the crisis had the potential of being worse than the Great Depression—thanks to the decisions we made to rescue our economy, thanks to the determination of the American people, we are stronger at home. Over the past 53 months, our businesses have added nearly 10 million new jobs, the longest streak of private sector job creation in American history. Construction and housing are rebounding. Our auto industry and manufacturing are booming. Our high school graduation rate is at a record high. More young people are earning their college degrees than ever before. Millions more Americans now have quality, affordable health care. We've cut the deficit by more than half. And now we have to sustain this momentum so more people share in this progress, so our economy works for every working American.

And just as we're stronger at home, the United States is better positioned to lead in the 21st century than any nation on Earth. It's not even close. We have the most powerful military in history. That's certainly not close. From Europe to Asia, our alliances are unrivaled. Our economy is the most dynamic. We've got the best workers. We've got the best businesses. We have the best universities and the best scientists. With our domestic energy revolution, including more renewable energy, we're more energy independent. Our technologies connect the world. Our freedoms and opportunities attract immigrants who "yearn to breathe free." Our founding ideals inspire the oppressed across the globe to reach for their own liberty. That's who we are. That's what America is.

And moreover, nobody else can do what we do. No other nation does more to underwrite the security and prosperity on which the world depends. In times of crisis, no other nation can rally such broad coalitions to stand up for international norms and peace. In times of disaster, no other nation has the capabilities to deliver so much so quickly. No nation does more to help citizens claim their rights and build their democracies. No nation does more to help people in the far corners of the Earth escape poverty and hunger and disease and realize their dignity. Even countries that criticize us, when the chips are down and they need help, they know who to call. They call us. That's what American leadership looks like. That's why the United States is and will remain the one indispensable nation in the world.

Now, sustaining our leadership, keeping America strong and secure, means we have to use our power wisely. History teaches us of the dangers of overreaching and spreading ourselves too thin and trying to go it alone without international support or rushing into military adventures without thinking through the consequences. And nobody knows this better than our veterans and our families—our veteran families, because you're the ones who bear the wages of war. You're the ones who carry the scars. You know that we should never send America's sons and daughters into harm's way unless it is absolutely necessary and we have a plan and we are resourcing it and prepared to see it through. You know the United States has to lead with strength and confidence and wisdom.

And that's why, after incredible sacrifice by so many of our men and women in uniform, we removed more than 140,000 troops from Iraq and welcomed those troops home. It was the right thing to do. It's why we refocused our efforts in Afghanistan and went after Al Qaida's leadership in the tribal regions in Afghanistan and Pakistan, driving the Taliban out of its strongholds and training Afghan forces, which are now in the lead for their own security. In just 4 months, we will complete our combat mission in Afghanistan and America's longest war will come to a responsible end. And we

honor every American who served to make this progress possible—[*applause*]—every single one, especially the more than 2,200 American patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan to keep us safe.

And now, as Afghans continue to work towards the first democratic transfer of power in their history, Afghan leaders need to make the hard compromises that are necessary to give the Afghan people a future of security and progress. And as we go forward, we'll continue to partner with Afghans so their country can never again be used to launch attacks against the United States.

Now, as I've always made clear, the blows we've struck against Al Qaida's leadership don't mean the end to the terrorist threat. Al Qaida affiliates still target our homeland; we've seen that in Yemen. Other extremists threaten our citizens abroad, as we've seen most recently in Iraq and Syria. As Commander in Chief, the security of the American people is my highest priority, and that's why, with the brutal terrorist group ISIL advancing in Iraq, I have authorized targeted strikes to protect our diplomats and military advisers who are there.

And let me say it again: American combat troops will not be returning to fight in Iraq. We'll not allow the United States to be dragged back into another ground war in Iraq. Because ultimately, it is up to the Iraqis to bridge their differences and secure themselves. The limited strikes we're conducting have been necessary to protect our people and have helped Iraqi forces begin to push back these terrorists. We've also been able to rescue thousands of men and women and children who were trapped on a mountain. And our airdrops of food and water and medicine show American leadership at our best. And we salute the brave pilots and crews who are making us proud in the skies of Iraq every single day.

And more broadly, the crisis in Iraq underscores how we have to meet today's evolving terrorist threat. The answer is not to send in large-scale military deployments that overstretch our military and lead for us occupying countries for a long period of time and end up feeding extremism. Rather, our military action in Iraq has to be part of a broader strategy to protect our people and support our partners to take the fight to ISIL.

So we're strengthening our partners: more military assistance to Government and Kurdish forces in Iraq and moderate opposition in Syria. And we're urging Iraqis to forge the kind of inclusive Government that can deliver on national unity and strong security forces and good governance that are ultimately going to be the antidote against terrorists. And we're urging countries in the region and building an international coalition, including our closest allies, to support Iraqis as they take the fight to these barbaric terrorists.

And today our prayers are with the Foley family in New Hampshire as they continue to grieve the brutal murder of their son and brother Jim. But our message to anyone who harms our people is simple: America does not forget. Our reach is long. We are patient. Justice will be done. We have proved time and time again we will do what's necessary to capture those who harm Americans, to go after those who harm Americans.

And we'll continue to take direct action where needed to protect our people and to defend our homeland. And rooting out a cancer like ISIL won't be easy, and it won't be quick. But tyrants and murderers before them should recognize that kind of hateful vision ultimately is no match for the strength and hopes of people who stand together for the security and dignity and freedom that is the birthright of every human being.

So, even as our war in Afghanistan comes to an end, we will stay vigilant. We will continue to make sure that our military has what it needs. And as today's generation of servicemembers keeps us safe, and as they come home, we also have to meet our responsibilities to them, just as they meet their responsibilities to America.

When I was here at the Legion 3 years ago, I said that the bond between our forces and our citizens has to be a sacred trust and that for me, for my administration, upholding our trust with our veterans is not just a matter of policy, it is a moral obligation.

And working together, we have made real progress. Think about it. Working with the Legion and other veterans service organizations, we've been able to accomplish historic increases to veterans funding. We've protected veterans health care from Washington politics with advanced appropriations. We've been able to make VA benefits available to more than 2 million veterans who didn't have them before, including more Vietnam vets who were exposed to agent orange. We've dedicated major new resources for mental health care. We've helped more than 1 million veterans and their families pursue their education under the post-9/11 GI bill.

And moreover, as the Legion and other veterans groups have said, once veterans get in the door, the care you receive from the VA is often very good. The specialized care is among the best in the world. And many of the hard-working folks at the VA are veterans themselves, veterans serving veterans. And we can never thank them enough for their good work.

But what we've come to learn is that the misconduct we've seen at too many facilities—with long wait times and veterans denied care and folks cooking the books—is outrageous and inexcusable.

As soon as it was disclosed, I got before the American people, and I said we would not tolerate it. And we will not. And I know the Legion's been on the frontlines, fanning out across the country, helping veterans who've been affected. And I know Bob is going to give you an update on the actions that we're taking. But what I want you to know, directly from me, is that we're focused on this at the highest levels. We are going to get to the bottom of these problems. We're going to fix what is wrong. We're going to do right by you, and we are going to do right by your families. And that is a solemn pledge and commitment that I'm making to you here.

Already, we're making sure that those responsible for manipulating or falsifying records are held accountable. We're reaching out to veterans—more than a quarter million so far—to get them off wait lists and into clinics. We're moving ahead with reforms at the Veterans Health Administration. And to help get that done, you supported and Congress passed and I signed into law the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act, which means more resources to help the VA hire more doctors and nurses and staff. It means if you live more than 40 miles from a VA facility or your VA doctors can't see you fast enough, we'll help you go to a doctor outside the VA.

And we're instituting a new culture of accountability. Bob doesn't play. Bob likes to recall a cadet prayer from West Point, which should be the ethos of all of us: "Choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong." And with the new legislation that I signed into law, Bob and the VA now have the authority to more quickly remove senior executives who don't meet our high standards. If you engage in unethical practices or cover up a serious problem, you should be and will be fired.

And by the way, if you blow the whistle on higher-ups because you've identified a legitimate problem, you shouldn't be punished, you should be protected.

So my bottom line is this: Despite all the good work that the VA does every day, despite all the progress that we've made over the last several years, we are very clear eyed about the problems that are still there. And those problems require us to regain the trust of our veterans and live up to our vision of a VA that is more effective and more efficient and that truly puts veterans first. And I will not be satisfied until that happens.

And we're in the midst of a new wave of veterans, more than a million servicemembers returning to civilian life. So we have to do more to uphold that sacred trust not just this year or next year, but for decades to come. We're going to have to stay focused on the five priorities that I outlined last year. And I just want to reiterate them for you just so you know what it is that we're committing to.

Number one, we need to make sure our veterans have the resources you deserve. And the new funding we just helped—we just passed with the help of Senators Burr and Kay, that helps. But as you know, it's not enough. Even in these tough fiscal times, I've therefore

proposed another increase in veterans funding for next year. And I'll continue to resist any effort to exploit the recent problems at the VA to turn veterans health care into a voucher system. We don't need vouchers. You need VA health care that you have earned and that you can depend on. We need to make the system work.

Second, we need to make sure veterans are actually getting the health care you need when you need it. Reforming the VHA and more doctors and staff is a good step. But with this new wave of veterans, we've got to deliver the care our newest veterans need most. And that includes tailored care that treats our women veterans with respect and dignity. It means doing even more to help veterans from all wars who are struggling with traumatic brain injury and posttraumatic stress. And we have to end this tragedy of suicide among our troops and veterans. As a country, we can't stand idly by on such tragedy.

So we're doing even more—more than ever—more awareness, more outreach, more access to mental health care. So long as any servicemember or veteran is suffering or feels like they have nowhere to turn or doesn't get the support that they need, that means we haven't done enough. When we all know we need to do more. Veterans called for it. We heard you, which is why today I'm announcing 19 new executive actions to help improve mental health care for those American heroes and their families.

So just one example: We're expanding suicide prevention training across the military and the VA so colleagues and clinicians can spot the warning signs and encourage our troops and veterans to seek help. We'll improve access to care, with more peer support—veterans counseling veterans—at VA hospitals and clinics. We're calling on Congress to help us ensure that our troops get coverage for mental health care that's on par with the coverage for other mental—medical conditions. And we're going to make it easier for servicemembers being treated for mental health conditions to continue their care as they transition to the VA, so automatically connecting them with the support they need, making sure they don't lose access to any medications they may be taking.

And maybe most of all, we're going to keep saying loud and clear to anyone out there who's hurting, it is not a sign of weakness to ask for help, it is a sign of strength. Talk to a friend. Pick up the phone. You are not alone. We are here for you. And every American needs to know, if you see someone in uniform or a veteran who is struggling, reach out and help them to get help. They were there for America. We now need to be there for them.

Our third priority: We have to keep attacking the disability claims backlog. Now, the good news is, since its peak last year, we've worked with you to slash the backlog by more than 50 percent. There had been a surge in the backlog in part because of an influx of new veterans, in part because we opened it up for folks who had PTSD, folks with agent orange symptoms. And then we had to work that backlog back down. The trend lines are good. But we don't just want those claims processed fast; we need to make sure they get processed right.

So we're going to keep at this until we end this backlog once and for all. And as we do, we're going to keep working to liberate you from those mountains of paper. We've got to move towards a paperless system, electronic health records that our troops and veterans can keep for life and then could cut down on some of the bureaucratic redtape so that you're getting the benefits that you've earned a little bit faster.

Number four, we need to uphold the dignity and rights of every veteran, and that includes ending the tragedy of homelessness among veterans. Again, we've got good news to report. Today I can announce that, working together over the last few years, we have been able to reduce the number of homeless veterans by one-third. And that means on any given night, there are 25,000 fewer veterans on the streets or in shelters. But we're not going to stop until every veteran who has defended America has a home in America. That's a basic commitment that we have to uphold.

And finally, we need to make sure our troops and veterans have every opportunity to

pursue the American Dream. And that includes a home of their own. You know, under the law, our servicemembers are entitled to reduced mortgage rates, but the burden is on them to ask for it and prove they're eligible, which means a lot of folks don't get the low rates they deserve.

So today we're turning that around. We're announcing a new partnership in which some of America's biggest banks and financial institutions will simplify the process, proactively notify servicemembers who qualify for lower rates, and make it easier to enroll. In other words, we're going to help more of our troops and military families own their own home without a crushing debt.

We're also going to keep helping our troops transition to civilian life. Because of the work we've done together, if you already have a military truck driver's license, every State now waives the skills test so it's easier for you to get a commercial driver's license. And we're going to keep pushing more States to recognize the incredible skills and training of our veterans. If you could do a job in a war zone, if you're a medic in a war zone, you shouldn't have to go take Nursing 101 to work in a hospital here in the United States. If you can handle million-dollar pieces of equipment in a war zone, that should count for something in getting certified back here at home. If you can do the kinds of jobs so many of you have done in the most extreme circumstances, I'm pretty confident you can do that job right here at home.

To help our troops and veterans pursue their education, we worked with loan servicers to automatically cap interest rates on student loans to our servicemembers at 6 percent. For veterans going back to school under the post-9/11 GI bill, we'll keep standing up against dishonest recruiting and predatory practices that target and prey on you and your families. So far, about 6,000 colleges and universities have pledged to adhere to our principles of excellence, promising to do right by our veterans. And more than a thousand colleges and universities have adopted our "8 Keys" to make sure that they're truly welcoming veterans and helping them succeed on campus. And by the way, every school in America should join them. You should be proud if you're educating a veteran, and you should be doing right by them.

And we're going to keep helping our veterans find those private sector jobs worthy of your incredible talents. Our new online Veterans Employment Center is a single, one-stop shop connecting veterans and their spouses to more than 1.5 million jobs that are open right now. And we're joining with States and local leaders to identify nearly two dozen cities and regions with the most opportunities for veterans. And with Michelle and Dr. Jill Biden leading the call, America's businesses are joining forces to hire or train veterans and spouses, more than half a million so far and growing.

So veterans' unemployment is going down, and it's now actually lower than the national average. It was higher to begin with, and we have been driving it down. But we've got more to go, especially for our post-9/11 veterans. So we're going to keep saying to every business in America, if you want somebody who knows how to get the job done, no matter what the mission, hire a veteran. Hire a vet.

So fixing what's broken at the VA, ensuring the resources you deserve, delivering the health care that you've earned, eliminating the backlog, standing up for your rights and dignity, helping you realize the American Dream that you so honorably defended—these are our commitments to you. This is what we're focused on. This is what we can do together, especially as our war in Afghanistan comes to an end and we welcome home our newest veterans.

There are a lot of them here tonight. We salute Captain Scott Miller of Indiana, a proud Hoosier and a proud marine. In Afghanistan, he went out on dangerous patrols, traveling to remote villages, meeting with tribal elders, building trust, forging partnerships to push back insurgents. And here at the Legion, he continues to serve by encouraging businesses across America to give back to the veterans who defended our way of life and make our prosperity possible. So thank you, Scott. Where is Scott here today? We are proud of him. There here is.

We salute Master Sergeant Carol Barker of Greensboro, North Carolina. As a first sergeant of her medevac unit, she was responsible for more than a hundred troops, helped save the lives of our wounded warriors in those critical first hours when life so often hung in the balance. And here at the Legion, she continues to serve, helping homeless veterans come in off the streets and begin their lives anew with a roof over their heads. Thank you, Carol. Where's Carol?

We salute Sergeant Joe Grassi, who grew up just outside New York City. After his hometown was attacked on 9/11, he left his civilian job, he joined the Army. A squad leader in Afghanistan, he spent most of his time on the flight line, in the 120-degree heat, supplying our helicopter crews. And here at the Legion, he continues to serve, helping veterans complete their disability claims and raising his voice in Washington for a strong national defense, because, he says, "some things are worth fighting for. America is worth fighting for." Thank you, Joe. We're proud of you. Thank you, sir.

So Scott, Carol, Joe—they're among the patriots here today who served in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I would ask all our post-9/11 generation veterans to stand if you are able and accept the thanks of a grateful nation. I ask these men and women to stand because the American people have to know that even as our war in Afghanistan comes to an end, our obligation to this generation of veterans has only just begun. And this cannot just be the work of Government and veterans groups alone. I want every American to take this commitment seriously. Please stand, post-9/11 generation, all of you who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq. We're grateful for you.

This is not just a job of Government. It's not just a job of the veterans organizations. Every American needs to join us in taking care of those who've taken care of us. Because only 1 percent of Americans may be fighting our wars, but 100 percent of Americans benefit from that 1 percent. A hundred percent need to be supporting our troops. A hundred percent need to be supporting our veterans. A hundred percent need to be supporting our military families.

And everybody can do something. Every American. Every business. Every profession. Every school. Every community. Every State. All of us, as one American team. That's how we will truly honor our veterans. That's how we will truly say thank you. That's how we will uphold the sacred trust with all who've served in our name.

God bless you. God bless our veterans. God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:07 p.m. at the Charlotte Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Nancy Brown-Park, former national president, American Legion Auxiliary; Jerry Hedrick, commander, American Legion Post Number 8 in Lexington, NC, who died in Charlotte, NC, on August 25; Matthew Ellow, Alabama delegate and president, Boys Nation; and James W. Foley, a freelance journalist who was killed by members of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization in Syria on August 19.

Remarks on the National Economy and the Situations in Iraq and Ukraine and an Exchange With Reporters

August 28, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. I want to say a few words on a number of topics and take a few questions before the long Labor Day weekend.

First, beginning with the number-one thing most Americans care about, the economy: This morning we found out that our economy actually grew at a stronger clip in the second quarter than we originally thought. Companies are investing. Consumers are spending. Over the past 4½ years, our businesses have now created nearly 10 million new jobs. So there are rea-

sons to feel good about the direction we're headed.

But as everybody knows, there's a lot more that we should be doing to make sure that all Americans benefit from the progress that we've made. And I'm going to be pushing Congress hard on this when they return next week.

Second, in Iraq, our dedicated pilots and crews continue to carry out the targeted strikes that I authorized to protect Americans there and to address the humanitarian situation on the ground.

As Commander in Chief, I will always do what is necessary to protect the American people and defend against evolving threats to our homeland. Because of our strikes, the terrorists of ISIL are losing arms and equipment. In some areas, Iraqi Government and Kurdish forces have begun to push them back. And we continue to be proud and grateful to our extraordinary personnel serving in this mission.

Now, ISIL poses an immediate threat to the people of Iraq and to people throughout the region. And that's why our military action in Iraq has to be part of a broader, comprehensive strategy to protect our people and to support our partners who are taking the fight to ISIL. And that starts with Iraq's leaders building on the progress that they've made so far and forming an inclusive Government that will unite their country and strengthen their security forces to confront ISIL.

Any successful strategy, though, also needs strong regional partners. I'm encouraged so far that countries in the region—countries that don't always agree on many things—increasingly recognize the primacy of the threat that ISIL poses to all of them. And I've asked Secretary Kerry to travel to the region to continue to build the coalition that's needed to meet this threat. As I've said, rooting out a cancer like ISIL will not be quick or easy, but I'm confident that we can—and we will—working closely with our allies and our partners.

For our part, I've directed Secretary Hagel and our Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare a range of options. I'll be meeting with my National Security Council again this evening as we continue to develop that strategy. And I've been consulting with Members of Congress, and I'll continue to do so in the days ahead.

Finally, I just spoke with Chancellor Merkel of Germany on the situation in Ukraine. We agree—if there was ever any doubt—that Russia is responsible for the violence in eastern Ukraine. The violence is encouraged by Russia. The separatists are trained by Russia. They are armed by Russia. They are funded by Russia. Russia has deliberately and repeatedly violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. And the new images of Russian forces inside Ukraine make that plain for the world to see. This comes as Ukrainian forces are making progress against the separatists.

Now, as a result of the actions Russia has already taken and the major sanctions we've imposed with our European and international partners, Russia is already more isolated than at any time since the end of the cold war. Capital is fleeing. Investors are increasingly staying out. Its economy is in decline. And this ongoing Russian incursion into Ukraine will only bring more costs and consequences for Russia.

Next week, I'll be in Europe to coordinate with our closest allies and partners. In Estonia, I will reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the defense of our NATO allies.

At the NATO summit in the United Kingdom, we'll focus on the additional steps we can take to ensure the alliance remains prepared for any challenge. Our meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission will be another opportunity for our alliance to continue our partnership with Ukraine. And I look forward to reaffirming the unwavering commitment of the United States to Ukraine and its people when I welcome President Poroshenko to the White House next month.

So with that, I'm going to take a few questions. And I'm going to start with somebody who, I guess, is now a big cheese—he's moved on. But I understand this is going to be his last chance to ask me a question in the press room. So I want to congratulate Chuck Todd [NBC News] and give him first dibs.

U.S. Military Role in Iraq/Formation of New Iraqi Government/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Syria/President's Consultation With Congress

Q. I'm glad you said "in the press room." Let me start with Syria. The decision that you have to make between—first of all, is it a "if" or "when" situation about going after ISIL in Syria? Can you defeat ISIL, or ISIS, without going after them in Syria? And then, how do you prioritize? You have said that Asad has lost legitimacy to lead. Defeating ISIS could help Asad keep power. Talk about how you prioritize those two pieces of your foreign policy.

The President. Well, first of all, I want to make sure everybody is clear on what we're doing now, because it is limited. Our focus right now is to protect American personnel on the ground in Iraq, to protect our Embassy, to protect our consulates, to make sure that critical infrastructure that could adversely affect our personnel is protected.

Where we see an opportunity that allows us with very modest risk to help the humanitarian situation there, as we did in Sinjar Mountain, we will take those opportunities after having consulted with Congress. But our core priority right now is just to make sure that our folks are safe and to do an effective assessment of Iraqi and Kurdish capabilities.

As I said, I think, in the last press conference, in order for us to be successful, we've got to have an Iraqi Government that is unified and inclusive. So we are continuing to push them to get that job done. As soon as we have an Iraqi Government in place, the likelihood of the Iraqi security forces being more effective in taking the fight to ISIL significantly increases. And the options that I'm asking for from the Joint Chiefs focuses primarily on making sure that ISIL is not overrunning Iraq.

What is true, though, is that the violence that's been taking place in Syria has obviously given ISIL a safe haven there in ungoverned spaces. And in order for us to degrade ISIL over the long term, we're going to have to build a regional strategy. Now, we're not going to do that alone. We're going to have to do that with other partners, and particularly Sunni partners, because part of the goal here is to make sure that Sunnis both in Syria and in Iraq feel as if they've got an investment in a Government that actually functions, a Government that can protect them, a Government that makes sure that their families are safe from the barbaric acts that we've seen in ISIL. And right now those structures are not in place.

And that's why the issue with respect to Syria is not simply a military issue, it's also a political issue. It's also an issue that involves all the Sunni states in the region and Sunni leadership recognizing that this cancer that has developed is one that they have to be just as invested in defeating as we are.

And so to cut to the chase in terms of what may be your specific concerns, Chuck, my priority at this point is to make sure that the gains that ISIL made in Iraq are rolled back and that Iraq has the opportunity to govern itself effectively and secure itself.

But when we look at a broader strategy that is consistent with what I said at West Point, that's consistent with what I said at the National Defense College, clearly ISIL has come to represent the very worst elements in the region that we have to deal with collectively. And that's going to be a long-term project. It's going to require us to stabilize Syria in some fashion, and stabilizing Syria in some fashion means that we've got to get moderate Sunnis who are able to govern and offer a real alternative and competition to what ISIL has been doing in some of these spaces.

Now, last point with respect to Asad: It's not just my opinion, I think it'd be international opinion, that Asad has lost legitimacy in terms of dropping barrel bombs on innocent families and killing tens of thousands of people. And right now what we're seeing is, the areas that ISIL is occupying are not controlled by Asad anyway. And frankly, Asad doesn't seem to have the capability or reach to get into those areas. So I don't think this is a situation where we have to choose between Asad or the kinds of people who carry on the incredible violence that we've been seeing there. We will continue to support a moderate opposition inside of Syr-

ia, in part because we have to give people inside of Syria a choice other than ISIL or Asad.

And I don't see any scenario in which Asad somehow is able to bring peace and stability to a region that is majority Sunni and has not so far shown any willingness to share power with them or in any kind of significant way deal with the longstanding grievances that they have there.

Q. Do you need Congress's approval to go into Syria?

The President. I have consulted with Congress throughout this process. I am confident that as Commander in Chief I have the authorities to engage in the acts that we are conducting currently. As our strategy develops, we will continue to consult with Congress. And I do think that it will be important for Congress to weigh in or that our consultations with Congress continue to develop so that the American people are part of the debate.

But I don't want to put the cart before the horse. We don't have a strategy yet. I think what I've seen in some of the news reports suggests that folks are getting a little further ahead of where we're at than we currently are. And I think that's not just my assessment, but the assessment of our military as well. We need to make sure that we've got clear plans, that we're developing them. At that point, I will consult with Congress and make sure that their voices are heard. But there's no point in me asking for action on the part of Congress before I know exactly what it is that is going to be required for us to get the job done. All right?

Colleen McCain Nelson [Wall Street Journal].

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. There you are.

Russia's Role in Ukraine

Q. Do you consider today's escalation in Ukraine an invasion? And when you talk about additional costs to Russia, are you ready at this point to impose broader economic sanctions? Or are you considering other responses that go beyond sanctions?

The President. I consider the actions that we've seen in the last week a continuation of what's been taking place for months now. As I said in my opening statement, there is no doubt that this is not a homegrown, indigenous uprising in eastern Ukraine. The separatists are backed, trained, armed, financed by Russia. Throughout this process, we've seen deep Russian involvement in everything that they've done.

I think in part because of the progress that you had seen by the Ukrainians around Donetsk and Luhansk, Russia determined that it had to be a little more overt in what it had already been doing. But it's not really a shift.

What we have seen, though, is that President Putin and Russia have repeatedly passed by potential off-ramps to resolve this diplomatically. And so, in our consultations with the—our European allies and partners, my expectation is, is that we will take additional steps primarily because we have not seen any meaningful action on the part of Russia to actually try to resolve this in diplomatic fashion.

And I think that the sanctions that we've already applied have been effective. And our intelligence shows that the Russians know they've been effective, even though it may not appear on Russian television. And I think there are ways for us to deepen or expand the scope of some of that work.

But ultimately, I think what's important to recognize is the degree to which Russian decisionmaking is isolating Russia. They're doing this to themselves. And what I've been encouraged by is the degree to which our European partners recognize, even though they are bearing a cost in implementing these sanctions, they understand that a broader principle is at stake. And so I look forward to the consultations that we'll have when I see them next week. Okay?

Zeke Miller [Time].

The President's Executive Authority/Consultation With Congress/Iraq/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. There you are.

Q. Last year, you said that you believe our democracy is stronger when the President acts with the support of Congress.

The President. Yes.

Q. In response to Chuck's question you said you don't have a strategy yet, but you'll reconsider that going forward. But why didn't you go to Congress before this current round of strikes in Iraq? Do you not believe that that's the case anymore, what you said last year? And throughout your career, you've also said that—you've raised concerns with the expansion of powers with the executive. Are you concerned that your recent actions, unilaterally, had maybe—have cut against that?

The President. No. And here's why: It is not just part of my responsibility, but it is a sacred duty for me as Commander in Chief to protect the American people. And that requires me to act fast, based on information I receive, if an Embassy of ours or a consulate of ours is being threatened. The decisions I made were based on very concrete assessments about the possibility that Erbil might be overrun in the Kurdish region and that our consulate could be in danger. And I can't afford to wait in order to make sure that those folks are protected.

But throughout this process, we've consulted closely with Congress, and the feedback I've gotten from Congress is, is that we're doing the right thing. Now, as we go forward—as I've described to Chuck—and look at a broader regional strategy with an international coalition and partners to systematically degrade ISIL's capacity to engage in the terrible violence and disruptions that they've been engaging in—not just in Syria, not just in Iraq, but potentially elsewhere if we don't nip this at the bud—then those consultations with Congress for something that is longer term, I think, become more relevant.

And it is my intention that Congress has to have some buy-in as representatives of the American people. And by the way, the American people need to hear what that strategy is. But as I said to Chuck, I don't want to put the cart before the horse. And in some of the media reports the suggestion seems to have been that we're about to go full scale on an elaborate strategy for defeating ISIL, and the suggestion, I guess, has been that we'll start moving forward imminently and somehow Congress—still out of town—is going to be left in the dark. That's not what's going to happen.

We are going to continue to focus on protecting the American people. We're going to continue, where we can, to engage in the sort of humanitarian acts that saved so many folks who were trapped on a mountain. We are going to work politically and diplomatically with folks in the region. And we're going to cobble together the kind of coalition that we need for a long-term strategy as soon as we are able to fit together the military, political, and economic components of that strategy. There will be a military aspect to that, and it's going to be important for Congress to know what that is, in part because it may cost some money. Okay?

I'll take—I'll just take a couple more. Yes.

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Iraq-U.S. Security Cooperation/Formation of New Iraqi Government/Regional Counterterrorism Cooperation

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Do you regret not moving on ISIS earlier? There are some reports indicating that most of the weapons, the U.S. weapons that they have, they got it or they acquired it after the fall of Mosul. And also, the President—Iraqi President said today that the Iraqi forces are in no position to stand up to ISIS. What makes you think that forming a new Government will change the situation?

The President. Well, once ISIL got into Mosul, that posed a big problem, because there's no doubt that they were able to capture some weapons and resources that they then used to finance additional operations.

And at that stage, we immediately contacted the Iraqi Government. Keep in mind, we had been in communications with the Iraqi Government for more than a year indicating that we saw significant problems in the Sunni areas. Prime Minister Maliki was not as responsive, perhaps, as we would have liked to some of the underlying political grievances that existed at the time.

There is no doubt that in order for Iraq's security forces to be successful, they're going to need help. They're going to need help from us. They're going to need help from our interna-

tional partners. They're going to need additional training. They're going to need additional equipment. And we are going to be prepared to offer that support.

There may be a role for an international coalition providing additional air support for their operations. But the reason it's so important that an Iraqi Government be in place is this is not simply a military problem. The problem we have had consistently is a Sunni population that feels alienated from Baghdad and does not feel invested in what's happening and does not feel as if anybody is looking out for them.

If we can get a Government in place that provides Sunnis some hope that a national Government serves their interests, if they can regain some confidence and trust that it will follow through on commitments that were made way back in 2006 and 2007 and 2008 and earlier about how you arrive at, for example, de-Baathification laws and give people opportunities so they're not locked out of Government positions—if those things are followed through on, and we are able to combine it with a sound military strategy, then I think we can be successful. If we can't, then the idea that the United States or any outside power would perpetually defeat ISIS, I think, is unrealistic.

As I've said before—I think I said in the previous press conference—our military is the best in the world. We can rout ISIS on the ground and keep a lid on things temporarily. But then as soon as we leave, the same problems come back again. So we've got to make sure that Iraqis understand in the end they're going to be responsible for their own security. And part of that is going to be the capacity for them to make compromises.

It also means that states in the region stop being ambivalent about these extremist groups. I mean, the truth is that we've had state actors who at times have thought that the way to advance their interests is, well, financing some of these groups as proxies is not such a bad strategy. And part of our message to the entire region is, this should be a wakeup call to Sunni, to Shia, to everybody, that a group like ISIS is beyond the pale, that they have no vision or ideology beyond violence and chaos and the slaughter of innocent people. And as a consequence, we've got to all join together, even if we have differences on a range of political issues, to make sure that they're rooted out. Okay?

Last question.

Q. Mr. President——

Potential U.S. Military Action in Ukraine/Impact of Sanctions on Russia/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Mr. President, despite all of the actions the West has taken to get Russia to pull back from Ukraine, Russia seems intent on taking one step after another—convoys, transports of arms. At what point do sanctions no longer work? Would you envisage the possibility of a necessity of military action to get Russia to pull back from Ukraine?

The President. We are not taking military action to solve the Ukrainian problem. What we're doing is to mobilize the international community to apply pressure on Russia. But I think it is very important to recognize that a military solution to this problem is not going to be forthcoming. Now, the fact that Russia has taken these actions in violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Ukrainians has resulted, I believe, in a weakening of Russia, not a strengthening of Russia. That may not be apparent immediately, but I think it will become increasingly apparent.

What it's also done is isolated Russia from its trading partners, its commercial partners, international business in ways that I think are going to be very difficult to recover from. And we will continue to stand firm with our allies and partners that what is happening is wrong, that there is a solution that allows Ukraine and Russia to live peacefully. But it is not in the cards for us to see a military confrontation between Russia and the United States in this region.

Keep in mind, however, that I'm about to go to a NATO conference. Ukraine is not a member of NATO, but a number of those states that are close by are. And we take our article 5 commitments to defend each other very seriously, and that includes the smallest NATO

member as well as the largest NATO member. And so part of the reason I think this NATO meeting is going to be so important is to refocus attention on the critical function that NATO plays to make sure that every country is contributing in order to deliver on the promise of our article 5 assurances.

Part of the reason I'll be going to Estonia is to let the Estonians know that we mean what we say with respect to our treaty obligations. We don't have those treaty obligations with Ukraine. We do, however, stand shoulder to shoulder with them, and we're doing not just a lot of work diplomatically, but also financially in order to make sure that they have the best chance at dealing with what is admittedly a very difficult situation. All right?

Q. What about sending arms to the Ukrainians, Mr. President?

The President. Okay.

Thank you very much, everybody.

Q. On immigration?

The President. Thank you, guys. Thank you.

Q. Immigration?

Q. Mr. President——

Immigration Reform/Unaccompanied Child Migrants to U.S.

Q. Mr. President, how are external events and your executive decisionmaking going to impact your decision on immigration reform? Some people say you're going to delay this.

The President. Well, let me just say this: I've been very clear about the fact that our immigration system is broken and needs to be fixed. And my preference continues to be that Congress act. I don't think anybody thinks that Congress is going to act in the short term, but hope springs eternal that after the midterm elections, they may act.

In the meantime, what I've asked Jeh Johnson to do is to look at what kinds of executive authorities we have in order to make the system work better. And we've had a lot of stakeholder discussions; that set of proposals is being worked up.

And the one thing that I think has happened was the issue with unaccompanied children that got so much attention a couple of months back. And part of the reason that was important was not because that represented a huge, unprecedented surge in overall immigration at the border, but I do think that it changed the perception of the American people about what's happening at the borders.

And so one of the things we've had—have had to do is to work through systematically to make sure that that specific problem in a fairly defined area of the border, that we're starting to deal with that in a serious way. And the good news is, we've started to make some progress. I mean, what we've seen so far is that throughout the summer, the number of apprehensions have been decreasing. Maybe that's counterintuitive, but that's a good thing because that means that fewer folks are coming across. The number of apprehensions in August are down from July, and they're actually lower than they were August of last year. Apprehensions in July were half of what they were in June. So we're seeing a significant downward trend in terms of these unaccompanied children.

And what that, I think, allows us to do is to make sure that those kids are being taken care of properly, with due process. At the same time, it's allowed us to then engage in a broader conversation about what we need to do to get more resources down at the border. It would have been helped along if Congress had voted for the supplemental that I asked for; they did not. That means we've got to make some administrative choices and executive choices about, for example, getting more immigration judges down there.

So that has kept us busy, but it has not stopped the process of looking more broadly about how do we get a smarter immigration system in place while we're waiting for Congress to act. And it continues to be my belief that if I can't see congressional action, that I need to do at least what I can in order to make the system work better.

But some of these things do affect timelines, and we're just going to be working through as systematically as possible in order to get this done. But have no doubt, in the absence of congressional action, I'm going to do

what I can to make sure the system works better.

Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:09 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; and Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), an alternative designation for the ISIL terrorist organization. A reporter referred to President Fuad Masum of Iraq.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Purchase, New York

August 29, 2014

Thank you, everybody. How is everybody doing? I just want to begin by saying thank you to the Wolf family. As Robert mentioned, he and Carol and Luke and James, they have been great friends for years now. I don't think I was ever behind Dennis Kucinich in the polls. [*Laughter*] That doesn't ring a bell. But it is true that Robert was a huge supporter before a lot of people knew how to pronounce my name. And anybody who is a friend of Robert's knows that once he's your friend, he doesn't stop. He's there for you through thick and thin, and I could not be prouder to know him.

You also have an outstanding Congresswoman here: Nita Lowey is here. Where did Nita go? There she is. We love Nita.

You know, it's a little warm in here. I'm going to take off my jacket. My tan suit is a lot cooler. [*Laughter*] This one is a little warmer. But let me just—let me start off by saying this: Robert mentioned what things were like when I was first starting politically, when I had first broken on the national scene, but I want to talk a little bit about what things were like right before I was President.

At the time, we were in the midst of two wars, and we were about to plunge into the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. And when Ronald Reagan ran in 1984, and first in 1980, he asked a simple question: Are you better off than you were 4 years ago? And the one thing that I can say is that because of the incredible resilience and strength of the American people, but also because we made some good decisions even though they were tough at the time, we are better off as a country than we were when I came into office.

And when you think about what was happening then, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. The economy was actually contracting at a faster pace than had happened during the Great Depression. Today, we've now seen 53 straight months of job growth, over 10 million jobs created. Unemployment rate has come down faster this year than any time in the last 30 years. The deficit has been cut by more than half. We have seen record corporate profits. The stock market has not just recovered, but actually gone well beyond where we were precrisis.

Our energy production here in America is higher than it's ever been. For the first time in maybe 20 years, we actually produce more energy than we import. We're producing twice as much clean energy as we were when I came into office, 10 times more solar energy, 3 times more wind energy, which partly accounts for why we reduced carbon emissions faster than any other advanced country in the world. The housing market has moved in the right direction. And across the board, around the world, when investors are now asked what's the best place to invest anywhere in the world, for 2 years running now, and the first time in a decade, people no longer say China, they say the United States of America. That's what we've accomplished working together.

And that doesn't include things like education reform and expanding access to college for millions of young people and capping their debt repayments every month so that they can

take teaching jobs or social work jobs and still afford to pursue their dreams. That doesn't include the incredible progress that we've made in terms of LGBT rights and marriage equality. We are a more prosperous nation and a fairer nation, a more just nation than we were when I came into office.

Now, having said all that, a lot of people still feel anxious. And the question then is, why is it that if things have gotten better, why are people anxious? Why is there still disquiet across the country? Why is it that people feel cynical about the possibilities for the future? And I'd offer three reasons.

The first is that although the economy as a whole has done well, there are still too many folks who have been left behind. Those of us at the very top have done very well. But there are still a lot of people out there out of work; still a lot of people who, at the end of the month, are struggling to pay the bills; still a lot of families who work really hard every single day, but can't figure out how to pay for childcare or can't imagine how they're going to save for their kids' college education or have no idea how they're going to retire. Corporate profits have gone up, stock market has gone up, but wages and incomes have barely budged—not just in the last 6 years, but in the last 20 years.

And so there's a sense that the compact that has held this country together—the idea that the economy grows from the bottom up and the middle out and that if you work hard, no matter who you are or where you start or what you look like, what faith you belong to, that you can make it if you try—that basic notion people feel more skeptical about.

And that's why, for the last 6 years and for the next 2 that I am President, we are going to continue to focus on basic steps that can strengthen the middle class and provide more ladders for people to get into the middle class. Making sure we've got early childhood education in place, because we know that gives us a good bang for the buck. Making sure that college is more affordable for more young people, because we know there's no better investment to be in the middle class and stay there than a college education. Making sure, yes, that we continue to provide affordable, quality health care to every single American so they don't go bankrupt when they get sick, and making sure the health care system works better for people. Making sure that childcare is accessible and family leave is available so that ordinary families who are doing the right thing feel like they've got a little bit of support.

And some of those efforts are going to cost money. But the truth is, is that we've also got a whole bunch of corporate loopholes out there that could be closed and a tax system that doesn't work. And if all of us are doing our fair share, then all of us can do well, not just some of us. And that is what America is about, and that's what I'm about. And that's what we're going to keep on fighting for for the next couple of years.

Second reason people are feeling anxious is that if you watch the nightly news, it feels like the world is falling apart. [*Laughter*] Now, let me say this: We are living through some extraordinarily challenging times. A lot of it has to do with changes that are taking place in the Middle East in which an old order that had been in place for 50 years, 60 years, 100 years was unsustainable and was going to break up at some point. And now what we are seeing is the old order not working, but the new order not being born yet. And it is a rocky road through that process and a dangerous time through that process.

So we've seen the barbarity of an organization like ISIL that is building off what happened with Al Qaida and 9/11, an extension of that same mentality that doesn't reflect Islam, but rather just reflects savagery and extremism and intolerance. We've seen divisions within the Muslim community between the Shia and Sunni. We continue to see an unwillingness to acknowledge the right of Israel to exist and its ability to defend itself. And we have seen, frankly, in this region, economies that don't work. So you've got tons of young people who see no prospect and no hope for the future and are attracted to some of these ideologies.

All of that makes things pretty frightening. And then, you turn your eyes to Europe and you see the President of Russia making a deci-

sion to look backwards instead of forward and encroaching on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their neighbors and reasserting the notion that might means right. And I can see why a lot of folks are troubled.

But—and here's the main message I have for you—the truth of the matter is, is that American military superiority has never been greater compared to other countries. Our men and women in uniform are more effective, better trained, better equipped than they have ever been. We have, since 9/11, built up the capacity to defend ourselves from terrorist attacks. It doesn't mean the threat isn't there and we can't be—we don't have to be vigilant, but it means that we are much less vulnerable than we were 10 or 12 or 15 years ago.

And the truth of the matter is, is that the world has always been messy. In part, we're just noticing now because of social media and our capacity to see in intimate detail the hardships that people are going through. The good news is that American leadership has never been more necessary and there's really no competition out there for the ideas and the values that can create the sort of order that we need in this world.

I hear people sometimes saying, well, I don't know, China is advancing. But I tell you what, if you look at our cards and you look at China's cards, I promise you you'd rather have ours. People say that, I don't know, Russia looks pretty aggressive right now. But Russia's economy is going nowhere. Here's a quick test for you: Are there long lines of people trying to emigrate into Russia? [*Laughter*] I don't think so.

Yes, the Middle East is challenging, but the truth is, it's been challenging for quite a while. And our values, our leadership, our military power, but also our diplomatic power, the power of our culture is one that means we will get through these challenging times just like we have in the past. And I promise you, things are much less dangerous now than they were 20 years ago, 25 years ago, or 30 years ago.

This is not something that is comparable to the challenges we faced during the cold war. This is not comparable to the challenges that we faced when we had an entire block of Communist countries that were trying to do us in. This is something we can handle, because we are Americans and that's what we do. And around the world, when you travel to Asia or you travel to Europe or you travel to Latin America or you travel to Africa, what you find is, among ordinary people, they are still looking to America as a beacon of hope and opportunity. And we should not forget that.

Which brings me to the last reason that people are anxious, and that is that Washington doesn't work. It's hard to describe how unproductive this Congress is. Harry Truman campaigned against what was known—what he called the "do-nothing Congress." But compared to this Congress, that was a do-a-whole-lot Congress. [*Laughter*]

And I have to tell you that, you know what, Democrats aren't perfect. We've got our own foibles. Democratic politicians, like all politicians, they're concerned about getting reelected. But the truth of the matter is, there's one reason why Congress is as broken as it is, and that is that the other party has become captive to the most ideologically rigid, most unproductive, most cynical group that I have ever seen.

They don't seem to be interested in getting things done. They seem constantly interested in the next election as opposed to the next generation. And that's not inherent in the Republican Party. I come from Illinois. My favorite President was the first Republican President, a guy named Abraham Lincoln. But that is what is happening now.

So the reason all of you are here today is because you understand it doesn't have to be that way. There has been a certain cynical genius to what some of these folks have done in Washington. What they've realized is, if we don't get anything done, then people are going to get cynical about government and its possibilities of doing good for everybody. And since they don't believe in government, that's a pretty good thing. And the more cynical people get, the less they vote. And if turnout is low and people don't vote, that pretty much benefits those who benefit from the status quo.

And so the fact that they haven't gotten anything done shouldn't be that surprising, but it

should also not feed your cynicism. It should feed a determination to want to get out there and have something better. And that is something that I cannot do alone. I've got to do it with all of you.

I was in a meeting earlier today, and somebody asked: "You know, Mr. President, what can you do? These folks, they just—all they do is just oppose whatever you propose even if they used to be for it, now they're against it. If you said the sky was blue, they'd say it was green. They deny the facts; they don't have any ideas for growing the economy or helping the middle class. Maybe you just need to announce a state of emergency." I said: "Well, now, I'm not going to do that. That's not how the Constitution works." [*Laughter*] I said to them, "You know, there's actually a solution to this that our Founders envisioned, and that is, people being involved citizens and getting out there and voting and bringing about change through the ballot box."

And we have the opportunity to do that during these midterms. And the young people here especially, some of whom may be eligible to vote for the first time, you've got to understand, this is your country. It doesn't work unless you are involved. It doesn't work unless you assert what you believe in, your values, your ideals. If you get cynical and you just say, well, you know what, it's not going to make any difference, then we'll continue to have this kind of dysfunctional government and we will not be able to tackle the issues that you care about, like climate change or making sure that the economy is working for everybody or making sure that college is affordable. We won't be able to do those things.

So my challenge to all of you is to make sure that this midterm election you're paying attention and you are engaged and you're involved. Even though there's no Presidential election yet, don't wait until 2016. You've got to get involved now. Because even if you agree with your President, you've got to have a Congress to work with your President in order to make things happen and deliver on the promises that all of us share.

So my closing comment—and this, again, is directed to the young people. And I say this sometimes—there was one young lady here who was a White House intern a couple of years ago. And I meet with the White House interns at the end of their 6-month stint, and they ask me questions. And usually they ask things like, how do you stay in shape? Is Bo as sweet as he looks? [*Laughter*]

But sometimes, they just ask about, as young people, what advice would you give me? And I typically tell them, number one, nothing is handed to you; you've got to work hard. I said, number two, don't just focus on what you want to be, focus on what you want to do, what you want to accomplish; focus on something you care about that's important and is not just about you.

But the third thing I tell them is, be hopeful. And I say to them, if there was any moment in human history in which you could be born, and you didn't know who you were going to be ahead of time—you didn't know whether you were going to be Bill Gates or some poor child in a slum in Calcutta—and you just asked, when is it that you would want to be alive, at what moment? The answer, without hesitation, should be right now, because the world has never been wealthier or healthier. It's never been more tolerant. It's never been better educated. It's never been more connected.

Yes, there are dangers. Yes, there are challenges. But they're all challenges we can meet, as long as you choose to meet them. I'm ready to work with you. Let's make it happen.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:49 p.m. at the residence of Robert and Carol Wolf. In his remarks, he referred to Luke and James Wolf, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Wolf; former Rep. Dennis J. Kucinich, in his capacity as a 2008 Democratic Presidential candidate; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and William H. Gates III, founder, technology adviser, and board member, Microsoft Corp. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Alternative Pay Plan for Members of the Uniformed Services
August 29, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am transmitting an alternative plan for monthly basic pay increases for members of the uniformed services for 2015.

I am strongly committed to supporting our uniformed service members, who have made such great contributions to our Nation over the past decade of war. As our country continues to recover from serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare, however, we must maintain efforts to keep our Nation on a sustainable fiscal course. This effort requires tough choices, especially in light of budget constraints.

Accordingly, I have determined it is appropriate to exercise my authority under section 1009(e) of title 37, United States Code, to set the 2015 monthly basic pay increase at 1.0 percent. This decision is consistent with my fiscal year 2015 Budget and it will not materially affect the Federal Government's ability to attract and retain well-qualified members for the uniformed services.

The adjustments described above shall take effect on January 1, 2015.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Alternative Pay Plan for Civilian Federal Employees
August 29, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am transmitting an alternative plan for pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule (GS) and certain other pay systems in January 2015.

Title 5, United States Code, authorizes me to implement alternative pay plans for pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems if, because of "national emergency or serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare," I view the adjustments that would otherwise take effect as inappropriate.

Civilian Federal employees have already made significant sacrifices as a result of a three-year pay freeze that ended in January 2014 with the implementation of a 1.0 percent pay increase—an amount lower than the private sector pay increases and statutory formula for adjustments to the base General Schedule. However, as the country's economic recovery continues, we must maintain efforts to keep our Nation on a sustainable fiscal course. This is an effort that continues to require tough choices and each of us to do our fair share.

Accordingly, I have determined that it is appropriate to exercise my statutory alternative plan authority under 5 U.S.C. 5303(b) and 5304a to set alternative January 2015 across-the-board and locality pay adjustments. Specifically, I have determined that for 2015, across-the-board pay increases will be 1.0 percent, and the current locality pay percentages shown in Schedule 9 of Executive Order 13655 of December 23, 2013, will remain at their 2014 levels. This decision will not materially affect our ability to attract and retain a well-qualified Federal workforce.

The adjustments described above shall take effect on the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2015.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Newport, Rhode Island

August 29, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Please, please, everybody sit down. Well, it is wonderful to see everybody in this just incredible setting. And I want to begin by thanking Rick and Betty for their incredible hospitality. Thank you so much. You couldn't be more gracious hosts, even arranging for perfect weather as we came in. [*Laughter*] So I know Valerie Jarrett took a picture of the sunset, which turned out very nicely on her smartphone. She is very pleased. [*Laughter*]

Couple other people I want to acknowledge, because this State has an incredible congressional delegation. We are incredibly proud of them. Your Senators: Jack Reed, who I saw at the airport, couldn't be here this evening; and your own Sheldon Whitehouse, who is here. Where's Sheldon? There he is.

You also have some terrific Members of the House of Representatives: Jim Langevin—where's Jim? There he is—and David Cicilline. Where's David? [*Applause*] Both of whom brought their mothers here today, so we thank their mothers for the outstanding job that they did.

I want to thank all the State legislators and mayors who are here. I want to thank Steve Israel, who has done tireless if thankless work as the head of the DCCC. Thank you for the great job you've done.

And a woman I love—she's spoken for, as am I—but I do love her, because she is tenacious, brilliant, tough, a master politician, and somebody who deserves to once again be Speaker of the House: Nancy Pelosi. Love Nancy.

So, because this is an intimate setting, I want to have the opportunity to have a conversation with you. I'll just make a few brief remarks at the top.

First of all, I kind of liked that suit yesterday. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. You looked good, Mr. President.

The President. I thought so. [*Laughter*] And I appreciate you honoring me by wearing a tan suit this evening, Sheldon. [*Laughter*] You know what, you cling to every last bit of summer that you can.

Second of all, obviously, I'm at the tail end of what has been an extraordinary journey, and it makes you reflect. And so I continually think about where we were when I started as President and where we are now.

When we started, we were plunging into the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, in some measures, actually worse than what was going on in '29 and '30. When we started, we were still in the midst of two wars. When we started, millions of people had no prospect of health insurance. When we started, the law of the land still allowed our military to kick people out because of who they loved.

And over the last 6 years, in large part because of the leadership of Nancy Pelosi in the first couple, and then our continued battle on behalf of middle class families in subsequent years, what we've seen is 53 straight months of job growth; the lowest unemployment rate since 2007—it's actually gone down faster this past year than any time in the last 30 years; a stock market more than recovered, which means people's 401(k)s and their retirement more secure; housing rebounding; an auto industry essentially back from the dead, hasn't been stronger in decades; millions of people who didn't have health insurance having health insurance, while at the same time health care costs and health care inflation rising at the lowest levels in 50 years; our deficit cut by more than half; our energy production higher than it's ever been—we're now actually producing more than we import for the first time in two decades; a doubling of clean energy production; a tenfold increase in solar energy, threefold increase in wind power; the most significant reductions in carbon emissions of any advanced economies, including Europe.

We have seen the highest high school graduation records on level, the highest college enrollment rates on record. We've expanded college access for millions of young people through the Pell grant program—named after a pretty good Member of the Senate. [*Applause*] We've been able to cap loan repayments at 10 percent of a graduate's income so that they can go into helping professions like teaching and social work that don't pay a lot of money. We've ended two wars. We have ended "don't ask, don't tell."

And so, objectively speaking, we are significantly better off than we were when Nancy and I first got together back in 2008. Now, despite that, there's anxiety across the country, a disquiet, and in some cases, pessimism. And the question is, why, if we're moving in the right direction, people don't feel it. And there are three reasons I would suggest.

Number one, the economy hasn't benefited everybody. The truth of the matter is, is some long-term trends over the last two decades have meant that the average person's wages and incomes have flatlined and people feel more insecure. Most of the people in this room have seen significant increases in their incomes and wealth. But the average working stiff is still thinking about paying the mortgage, still thinking about making ends meet at the end of the month, still worried about the rise in food prices and gas prices, and isn't sure whether their child, no matter how hard they work, will be able to achieve the same kinds of things that they were able to achieve because of opportunity in America. So that makes people nervous about the long term and a number of people nervous about the here and now.

Number two, internationally, we're going through a tumultuous time. And I don't have to tell you, anybody who has been watching TV this summer, it seems like it is just wave after wave of upheaval, most of it surrounding the Middle East. You're seeing a change in the order in the Middle East. But the old order is having a tough time holding together, and the new order has yet to be born, and in the interim, it's scary.

The good news is that we actually have a unprecedented military capacity and since 9/11 have built up a security apparatus that makes us in the here and now pretty safe. We have to be vigilant, but this doesn't immediately threaten the homeland. What it does do, though, is it gives a sense, once again, for future generations: Is the world going to be upended in ways that affect our kids and our grandkids?

And then number three, people have a sense that Washington just doesn't work. And as a consequence, major challenges feel unaddressed, and major opportunities we don't seem to be able to seize. And that makes people cynical.

And so I want to—during the question and answers, I'm happy to talk about why I believe that not only is the economy doing well now, but the opportunities for us to create a strong middle class and ladders into the middle class are right there in front of us. I want to talk about how the strategies to rebuild an international order that doesn't just work for us, but for people around the world is right there in front of us.

I want to focus on this last thing, this third thing about—that Washington doesn't work. The tendency is to portray this as a problem with the system and a problem with both parties: Politicians are corrupt, and there's too much money, and the lobbyists have all this influence, and it doesn't really matter who's in charge. No matter what, Washington doesn't work.

And I'm here to assert—although I admit that this is probably preaching to the choir—that this is not a problem that both Democrats and Republicans suffer from. Democrats have their problems, Lord knows. Nancy, she deals with a caucus that occasionally is challenging. The Senate, by its nature, means that people have their quirky approaches to things. There are times where we're too dogmatic about certain things, not flexible enough; we're too captive to particular interests. It's politics. It's not perfect.

But the fact of the matter is, is that every time I came to Nancy Pelosi when she was

Speaker and there was a tough issue, and the question was, were we going to do the right thing even if it was politically unpopular, Nancy and the Democratic caucus in the House would step up and do it. And we had a whole bunch of people lose their seats because they thought it was the right thing to do.

The fact of the matter is, every time there has been the possibility of compromise on big issues like how we deal with our deficits and our debt, as unpalatable as it has sometimes been, we have been willing to put forward agendas that try to allow us to govern and meet Republicans more than half way.

This is not some equivalence between the parties. The reason Government does not work right now is because the other party has been captured by an ideological, rigid, uncompromising core that ignores science, is not particularly interested in facts, is not particularly interested in compromise, but is interested in having its own way 100 percent of the time. And that way, in large part, includes dismantling so much of what has created this incredible middle class and this incredible wealth here in America.

So, if you want to deal with the anxieties that Americans feel right now, there are going to be some things that are a little bit out of our control. We're not going to solve every problem in the Middle East right away, although we can make sure we're safe and that we're empowering better partners rather than the worst in the region. We're not going to solve every problem of the economy just in the next couple of years; there are still some long-term challenges and trends that we have to address.

But for the most part, we can build on the successes we've had over the last 6 years and make America do so much better than it's doing right now if we create a Congress that just even comes close to functioning. There will still be special interests. There will still be lobbyists. There will still be contentious issues. Politicians will still be concerned about the next election. But every so often, we'll be able to govern and move forward on agendas like equal pay for equal work for women or minimum wage or rebuilding our infrastructure or all the issues in which a majority of Americans agree and, in some cases, a majority of Republicans agree.

So the answer to our challenges is actually pretty simple: We need a better Congress. And in order to do that—there are all kinds of formulas and polls and data and all, but actually, the answer to that is pretty simple too—people have to vote. People have to feel engaged. And the brilliance of the other side has been, over the last 4 years, they figured out, if we do nothing, if we oppose everything, then their poll numbers may be at 7 or 10 or whatever it is, but they will feed a cynicism about the possibilities of doing common work that leads people to just say, "I give up," and they turn away, and they don't vote. And the status quo remains.

So I'm encouraged by all of you here tonight because I think you understand how urgent it is for us to break that psychology. We've got to restore a sense in people that they have the power to move their Government forward. But in order to do that, we've got to make sure they vote. And in order to make sure they vote and that we've got the resources to make the case to the American people, the DCCC has got to be able to keep pace with all of the crazy money that's floating around there. You're helping us do that, and I'm very grateful for you.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:58 p.m. at the residence of Richard Bready and Betty Easton. In his remarks, he referred to June Langevin, mother of Rep. James R. Langevin; and Sabra Cicilline, mother of Rep. David N. Cicilline. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Weekly Address
August 30, 2014

Hi, everybody. Whether you're firing up the grill, fired up for some college football, or filling up the car for one last summer road trip, happy Labor Day weekend.

We set aside Labor Day to honor the working men and women of America. And this Labor Day, we've got more to celebrate. Over the past 53 months, our businesses have added nearly 10 million new jobs. Last month, for the first time since 1997, we created more than 200,000 jobs for 6 straight months. And for the first time in over a decade, business leaders worldwide have declared, 2 years running, that the number-one place to invest isn't China, it's America.

So there are reasons to be optimistic about where we're headed. And the decisions we make now will determine whether or not we accelerate this progress: whether economic gains flow to a few at the top or whether a growing economy fuels rising incomes and a thriving middle class.

Think about it this Labor Day. The things we often take for granted—like Social Security and Medicare, workplace safety laws and the right to organize for better pay and benefits, even weekends—we didn't always have these things. Workers and the unions who get their back had to fight for them. And those fights built a stronger middle class.

To build a stronger middle class in today's changing economy, we've got to keep fighting. We've got to fight for the right to affordable health insurance for everybody; the right to fair pay, family leave, and workplace flexibility; the right to a fair living wage.

And let me focus on that last one for a minute. In America, no one who works full time should ever have to raise a family in poverty. A hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay. And raising the minimum wage would be one of the best ways to give a boost to working families. It would help around 28 million Americans from all walks of life pay the bills, provide for their kids, and spend that money at local businesses. And that grows the economy for everybody.

The bottom line is, America deserves a raise. But until we've got a Congress that cares about raising working folks' wages, it's up to the rest of us to make it happen. And in the year and a half since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, Americans of all walks of life are doing just that.

Thirteen States and DC have done their part by raising their minimum wages. Four more States have minimum wage initiatives on the ballot of this November. And the States where the minimum wage has gone up this year have experienced higher job growth than the States that haven't.

Business leaders at companies like the Gap are doing their part. They're raising base wages for tens of thousands of workers because they know it's good for business.

Mayors across the country are doing their part. Mayor Emanuel in Chicago and Mayor Garcetti in L.A. are working to lift their cities' wages over time to at least $13 an hour.

I've tried to do my part by requiring companies that get contracts with the Federal Government to pay their workers a fair wage of $10.10 an hour.

And earlier this month, the president of Kentucky State University set a great example by giving himself a $90,000 pay cut so that he could give raises to his lowest paid employees. His sacrifice will give more of his workers and their families a little extra money to help make ends meet.

That's how America built the greatest middle class the world has ever known: not by making sure a fortunate few at the top are doing well, but by making sure that everyone who's willing to work hard and play by the rules can get ahead. That's the bedrock this country is built on: hard work, responsibility, sacrifice, and looking out for one another as one united American family.

So let's keep that in mind this Labor Day and every day. Have a great weekend, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:15 a.m. on August 29 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on August 30. In the address, the President referred to Raymond M. Burse, interim president, Kentucky State University. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 29, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 30.

Remarks at Laborfest in Milwaukee, Wisconsin
September 1, 2014

The President. Hello, Milwaukee! Thank you! Oh, it's good to be back in Milwaukee. Give Chris a big round of applause for that great introduction.

Happy Labor Day, everybody! Happy Labor Day. Today is a day that belongs to you, the working men and women who make America the greatest country on Earth. So thank you to the working folks who are here today and the unions who have always had your back. Thank you to the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, to the Wisconsin AFL–CIO.

It's good to be back at Laborfest. I hope you don't mind, I brought a friend with me, somebody who is fighting for American workers every day: America's Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, is in the house. And I just found out Tom's wife is from Milwaukee, so his father-in-law is here. So I just told his father-in-law he's doing a really good job, because you always want to make a guy look good in front of his father-in-law. [*Laughter*]

We've got some other friends I want to acknowledge. First of all, your Congresswoman, Gwen Moore, is here. Your mayor, Tom Barrett, is in the house. We've got one of my favorites, Mary Kay Henry from SEIU. Newly elected Lily Garcia from NEA. My pal—not a Packers fan, he's a Steelers fan, but he's a good guy anyway—Leo Gerard from USW, Steelworkers. Billy Hite from UA; Joe Hansen from UFCW.

To all the other labor leaders who are here, we are so glad to have you. And we're here because of the things all too often we take for granted. Anybody who's got a seat, feel free to sit down. Yes, I don't want anybody fainting; it's all hot out here. I might get you back up on your feet at some point.

But we're here to celebrate something that sometimes the American people take for granted: the 40-hour workweek, overtime pay, a minimum wage, weekends like this one. All that didn't happen by accident. It happened because America's workers organized for it, fought for it. History shows that working families can get a fair shot in this country, but only if we're willing to fight for it.

Now, the first time I came to Laborfest was—I was still a candidate back in 2008. And during that campaign, I promised, if you send me to the White House, I'd stand with you in that fight. Now, 2 weeks later, our financial system collapsed. A recession almost became a depression. And in the years since, our country has faced a choice. There are some folks who wanted to place an even bigger bet on top-down economics, the kind of economics that helped cause the crisis in the first place: more tax cuts for those at the top, fewer rules for big banks and corporations, this blind faith that maybe prosperity would finally trickle down on the rest of us if folks up at the top just kept on doing better and better.

But, you know what, Milwaukee, I didn't run for President to double down on top-down economics. I ran for President because I believed in bottom-up economics. I believed in middle-out economics. I placed a bet on you. I placed a bet on America's workers. I put my money on American workers and the belief that our economy grows best when everybody has got a shot, when folks who are willing to work hard can get into the middle class and stay into the middle class. And I've come back to Laborfest to say that because of your hard work, because of what we've been through together, that bet is starting to pay off.

America is stronger because of the decisions we made to rescue our economy and rebuild it on a new foundation asking the simple question: Is this good for ordinary Americans, is this good for working people, not just a few, for—but for everybody? And over the past 53 months, our businesses have created nearly 10 million new jobs. We're on a streak where, the last 6 months, we've created more than 200,000 jobs each month. That's the first time that's happened since 1997.

Construction is rebounding. Energy and technology are booming. American manufacturing is steadily creating jobs for the first time

since the 1990s. Our businesses export more goods made right here in America to the rest of the world than ever before.

America is stronger because we saved the American auto industry and more than 1 million jobs that depend on the auto industry. Today, our workers are building more cars than any time since 2002. And by the way, they're really good cars. The auto industry is adding jobs at the strongest rate since the 1990s.

America is stronger because we invested in homegrown energy. The world's number-one oil and gas producer—it's not Russia, it's not Saudi Arabia, it's the U.S. of A. We are the largest producer. And for the first time in nearly 20 years, America now produces more oil than we buy from other countries. But we're also producing more clean energy, putting folks back to work. We've tripled the amount of wind power that creates energy. We've increased by 10 times the amount of solar power we create. And all of that is creating tens of thousands of good jobs all across the country.

America is stronger because we set our schools on a race to the top. We helped more middle class families afford college. Today, thanks to outstanding teachers, our high school graduation rate is at a record high. More young people are earning their college degrees than ever before.

America is stronger because we helped millions of responsible homeowners stay in their homes, and we got some of the biggest banks who sold deceptive mortgages to help make things right. They're ponying up billions of dollars to do right by folks who got cheated. We changed a Tax Code that was skewed too much to the wealthy at the expense of working families. We made sure, you know what, you guys have got to pay a little more. And as a consequence, we cut our deficits by more than half.

And yes, Milwaukee, America is stronger because millions more Americans have the peace of mind of quality, affordable health insurance that they can count on. [*Applause*] Yes, we did that.

So I just want everybody to understand, because you wouldn't always know it from watching the news—[*laughter*]—by almost every measure, the American economy and American workers are better off than when I took office. We're better off by almost every measure. But look, none of this progress has come easy. Every inch of it we have had to fight for. Every inch of it we've had to work against a lockstep opposition that is opposed to everything we do.

But it was worth it. Every gray hair is worth it. [*Applause*] Every gray hair is worth it, and at least I've still got some hair. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. And you look good!

The President. Oh, I look good—see, I like that. Thank you. Yes, whenever folks say—whenever they see me they say, you know what, you look okay, like they're surprised. [*Laughter*] And then, sometimes, they say I look taller than I do on TV. [*Laughter*] I say, yes, I look—that's because the TV is small. It makes me look smaller. I'm—[*laughter*].

Look, it is thanks to the grit, to the resilience of working Americans that this country we love, it's recovered faster, it's come farther than almost any other advanced economy. For the first time in more than a decade, business leaders around the world, when you ask them, where do you want to invest, what's the number-one place to invest, they don't say China, they don't say Germany. They say the United States of America. And our lead is growing. U.S.A.!

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. So look, I'm saying all this just because sometimes, if you're watching TV or something, I mean, it's just kind of a whole downer. [*Laughter*] Now, we've got struggles. We've got work to do. But there are a lot of reasons to be optimistic about America.

More folks are working. The economy's growing stronger. The engines are revving a little louder. And the question now is, are we going to make the right decisions to accelerate this progress? Are we going to continue to focus on working families? Are we going to continue to make sure that a growing economy gives everybody rising incomes and wages? Are we going to make sure that we're helping the middle class and everybody who is trying to get into the middle class?

It's a good thing that corporate profits are high; I want American businesses to succeed. It's a good thing that the stock market is booming. A lot of folks have 401(k)s in there; I want them to feel good. But I also want to see the guy who's breaking his back on two 8-hour shifts so he's got enough money to send his kids to college, I want to make sure that guy is getting a break. I want to make sure he's getting some help. I want to see that woman who's worked for 40 years be able to retire with some dignity and some respect. That's how I measure progress, not just by how well the economy is doing overall, but how it's doing for folks who are working so hard, doing everything right, just want a fair shot, and didn't have anything handed to them in their lives, weren't born with a silver spoon in their mouths.

And the reason that's who I'm thinking about is because that's the family I grew up in. That's the family Michelle's family grew up in. This country gave me a chance. It gave Michelle a chance. I believe in the American Dream because I have lived it. And I ran for this office to restore it for everybody so no matter what you look like and no matter where you came from, no matter how you started, you can make it in America if you try.

So that's what's at stake right now. That's what's at stake: making sure the economy works for everybody. I've got a vision of an economy where opportunity is open to everybody who's willing to work hard. I want an economy where new, long-term investments in American energy and American infrastructure and American manufacturing and American innovation are unleashing new jobs in new industries right here in Wisconsin, right here in Milwaukee; an economy where our workers have the chance to earn new skills that lead to that good job, where our children graduate from school fully prepared for the global competition they're going to face.

I want an economy where your hard work pays off with higher wages and higher incomes and fairer pay for women and workplace flexibility for parents and affordable health insurance and decent retirement benefits. I'm not asking for the Moon, I just want a good deal for American workers.

Sometimes, when I talk about this stuff to some of my folks on the other side of the aisle, they're all, like, well, why are you stirring up class resentments? I'm not stirring up class resentment.

Let me tell you something, working families, they are fine that folks are rich. The average person, they're not looking for a yacht. They're not looking for their own plane. They're not looking for a mansion. They don't need to be vacationing in St. Bart's. All they're looking for is that if they work hard, they can pay the bills; that they can send their kids to school; they can retire with some dignity, maybe take a vacation once in a while, go to Wisconsin Dells or something. They ain't looking for nothing fancy. That's where Michelle and I used to take Malia and Sasha. We'd be in that water so long, fingers all pruned up. And there were a lot of little kids in there, which made you a little suspicious about the water. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying. [*Laughter*] That was not in the prepared remarks. Let me—[*laughter*].

Now, most of the policies I'm talking about have two things in common: They're going to help more working families get ahead, and the Republicans who run our Congress oppose almost all of them.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote! [*Applause*] Don't boo, vote! It's easy to boo. I want you to vote. Yes, don't boo, vote. They oppose almost everything. And I'm not making that up; I'm just telling the truth. It's just the facts.

In fact, they oppose stuff they used to be for. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. No, it's true. I mean, they used to be for building roads and bridges and all that. Now, suddenly, no, we can't build roads. Well, why not? Because you oppose—because you proposed it. I am just telling the truth. The sky is blue today. Milwaukee brats are delicious. The Brewers are tied for first place. And Republicans in Congress love to say no. Those are just facts; they're facts of life. They say no to everything.

If we had a Congress that cared about policies that actually helped working people, I promise you we could get everything done that we've talked about doing. But until we have that Congress, it's up to us to fight for these policies.

So, wherever I can, I've acted on my own. I acted on my own to make sure more women had the protections they needed to fight for fair pay on the workplace, because I think when women succeed, America succeeds. I was raised by a single mom, so I know how hard it is for a lot of women out there. And by the way, men, you should want your wife to get paid fair. She's bringing that money home. That's not a women's issue, that's your issue. That's money out of your family's pocket.

That's why I took action on my own to give millions of Americans the chance to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their incomes. I don't want young people saddled with debt when they're just starting out in life. That's why I acted on my own to make sure companies that receive Federal contracts, that they pay their workers a fair wage of at least $10.10 an hour. If you work full time in America, you shouldn't be living in poverty, you shouldn't be trying to support a family on poverty.

And in the year and a half since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, of course, the Republicans in Congress have blocked it, but more and more Americans are doing their part to make it happen. This is why I stay optimistic, even with some of the nonsense that goes on in Washington. You've seen business leaders at companies like the Gap that raised base wages for tens of thousands of workers because they knew it was good for business. You've seen mayors across the country doing their part, and today, on Labor Day, the mayor of Los Angeles is announcing a plan to raise his city's minimum wage.

You've seen—here's a good story. Last month, the president of Kentucky State University, he gave himself a $90,000 pay cut so that he could raise wages for his lowest paid employees. Thirteen States, District of Columbia—they've raised their minimum wages. Four more States are putting minimum wage initiatives on the ballot in November.

And you know what, here's the best part. You'll hear opponents, they'll say, well, minimum wage, they're going to kill jobs. Except it turns out, the States where the minimum wage has gone up this year had higher job growth than the States that didn't raise the minimum wage. That's the facts.

All across the country right now, there's a national movement going on made up of fast food workers organizing to lift wages so they can provide for their families with pride and dignity. There is no denying a simple truth: America deserves a raise. Folks are doing very well on Wall Street; they're doing very well in the corporate board rooms. Give America a raise.

And I think, eventually, Congress is going to hear them. We'll break those folks down. We'll just stay on them. We'll just keep at it. That's how I got Michelle to marry me. I just wore her down. [*Laughter*] Persistence, you just stay at it. Because the only thing more powerful than an idea whose time has come is when millions of people are organizing around an idea whose time has come. Millions of people are voting for an idea whose time has come.

I know it gets frustrating, though, when it feels like your voices aren't heard in Washington. I promise you I share that frustration. After all that unions have done to build and protect working Americans, I know it's frustrating when people have the gall to blame you for the problems facing working Americans. I know you've got some experience with that around here.

But you know what, if I were looking for a good job that lets me build some security for my family, I'd join a union. If I were busting my butt in the service industry and wanted an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, I'd join a union. If I were a firefighter or police officer risking my life and helping to keep my community safe and wanted to make sure I came home safely to my family, I'd join a union. I'd want a union looking out for me.

And if I cared about these things, I'd also want more Democrats looking out for me. I'm

just saying. Because when the rest of the country is working to raise wages, but Republicans in Congress won't, it ain't right. Not only is it not right, it ain't right. [*Laughter*] When the rest of the country is working to open up more businesses, but Republicans in Congress block investments that would help more businesses grow, it ain't right. When unions and CEOs, when law enforcement and the evangelical community, when folks who usually don't agree on anything agree that we should be fixing our broken immigration system, but the Republicans in the House of Representatives have been sitting on a bill for more than a year, it ain't right.

So that's why we have to keep fighting. At the beginning of the last century, people fought against the idea of a 40-hour workweek, they fought against weekends, they fought against workplace safety laws. Eighty years ago, people fought against the idea of Social Security. Fifty years ago, people fought against the idea of Medicare. But guess what? We won those fights.

And just like in the past, today, you've still got people fighting against the right for health care for everybody or the right to fair wages, or they even fight against equal pay for equal work. But we will win those fights too. I promise. And I know that because America is the story of progress. It can be slow, yes. It can be frustrating. Sometimes, you get half a loaf where you wanted the whole loaf. Sometimes, you might just get a quarter of a loaf.

But if you look at our history, the story is progress. And that's because there have always been Americans who have had the courage to march and to organize and to fight for themselves, but then also to fight for each other. And I'm asking you to do the same thing. I asked you the same thing back in 2008.

I'm asking you to believe not just in my ability to bring about the change we need, I'm asking you to believe in yours. I'm asking you to believe in you. Because even when our politics just ain't right, there's a whole lot that is right with America.

America is that dad who punches in every morning to put food on the table. America is the mom who's working the graveyard shift to provide for her kids. America is the child who dreams of being the first in his family to go to college. America is the teacher who stays after work and dips into her own pocket for supplies to help that child get there. America is the autoworker who thought she'd never make another car again, and now she can't make them fast enough. America is the construction worker who's helping build more homes and businesses to get solar panels on the top. America is on the move. [*Applause*] America is on the move.

America is not the party we belong to, but the values we share. America is hard work. America is responsibility. America is sacrifice. America is looking out for one another. Let's embrace some economic patriotism that says we rise or fall together as one Nation, as one people.

Don't reward companies that ship jobs and profits overseas; reward companies that are investing right here in Milwaukee. Let's make sure our fellow citizens have access to good childcare and preschool and college and health care. Let's make sure women get fair pay. Let's make sure working moms and dads can get a day off if their child is sick or their parents are having a tough time. Let's make sure nobody who is working full time is raising their family in poverty. These ideas are not un-American, they're how we built America—together.

I'll tell you, Milwaukee, the hardest thing in life is changing a stubborn status quo. And it's even harder when it seems like some of the folks in power, all they care about is keeping power. But there are plenty of folks who count on you to get cynical and not vote because you don't think you can make a difference. That's how they're going to stay in power. They believe you won't get involved. They believe you won't organize. They believe you won't vote. And that way, the special interests stay in power. And they will try to divide us, and they'll try to distract you, and they'll try to run the okey-doke on you and bamboozle you and hoodwink you. Don't buy it. Don't buy it.

Because despite the cynics, America is on the move. It's making progress. Despite all the

opposition, there are workers who have jobs now who didn't have them before. There are families with health insurance who didn't have them before. There are students going to college who couldn't afford it before. There are troops who were in Afghanistan who are coming home.

Cynicism is fashionable these days, but cynicism didn't put anybody on the Moon. Cynicism never won a war, it never cured a disease, it never started a business, it never fed a young mind, it never built a road or a bridge.

Cynicism is a bad choice. Hope is the better choice. Hope is what gives us courage. Hope is what gave soldiers courage to storm a beach. Hope is what gives young people the strength to march for women's rights and worker's rights and civil rights and voting rights and gay rights and immigration rights.

Hope, the belief that there are better days ahead, the belief that together, we can build up our middle class and hand down something better to our kids, that's what built America. And America's best days are still ahead. I believe it. You need to believe it too. Let's get to work.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:49 p.m. in Henry Maier Festival Park. In his remarks, he referred to Christopher Harris, vice president, United Steelworkers Local 2–209; Ann M. Staudenmeier, wife, and L. William Staudenmeier, Jr., father-in-law, of Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez; Mary Kay Henry, international president, Service Employees International Union; Lily Eskelsen Garcia, president, National Education Association; Leo W. Gerard, president, United Steelworkers; William P. Hite, general president, United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada (UA); Joseph T. Hansen, international president, United Food and Commercial Workers; Mayor Eric M. Garcetti of Los Angeles, CA; and Raymond M. Burse, interim president, Kentucky State University.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Commencement of United States Military Operations in Iraq

September 1, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As I reported on August 8 and 17, 2014, U.S. Armed Forces have conducted targeted airstrikes in Iraq for the limited purposes of stopping the advance on Erbil by the terrorist group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), supporting civilians trapped on Mount Sinjar, and supporting operations by Iraqi forces to recapture the Mosul Dam. U.S. Armed Forces have also provided humanitarian assistance to the civilians trapped on Mount Sinjar.

On August 28, 2014, I further authorized U.S. Armed Forces to conduct targeted airstrikes in support of an operation to deliver humanitarian assistance to civilians in the town of Amirli, Iraq, which is surrounded and besieged by ISIL. Pursuant to this authorization, on August 30, 2014, U.S. military forces commenced targeted airstrike operations in the vicinity of Amirli, Iraq. These additional operations will be limited in their scope and duration as necessary to address this emerging humanitarian crisis and protect the civilians trapped in Amirli.

I have directed these actions, which are in the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. These actions are being undertaken in coordination with and at the request of the Iraqi government.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public

Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

The President's News Conference With President Toomas Hendrik Ilves of Estonia in Tallinn, Estonia

September 3, 2014

President Ilves. Good morning. To begin with, I'd like to welcome President Obama to Estonia. It is a genuine pleasure and an honor to receive you right before the NATO summit. Your visit sends a strong message. We are grateful to the United States and to you personally for your leadership, your commitment, and your support to Estonia.

To begin with, I also want to say that we are appalled by the latest news from Iraq. We condemn these barbaric acts. We see ISIS as a serious threat to all of us and stand together with the United States and our allies on this issue.

The main issue on our agenda today is security. The question on everyone's mind is the situation in Ukraine and its wider impact on European security. I just did hear that President Poroshenko and President Putin have agreed on a cease-fire. I just hope it works. But in the general situation, we need to be clear and consistent in the language that we use to describe the situation in Ukraine.

As the EU underlined last weekend, this is Russian aggression. The EU and the United States are ready to take further restrictive measures in response to Russia's behavior. Russia must admit that it is a party to the conflict and take genuine steps that will lead to a deescalation of the conflict. We must also continue to support Ukraine by providing the country with the assistance that it needs.

When it comes to the security of our region, the United States engagement here runs deep. Estonia is a close and reliable ally to the United States. We take our NATO commitment seriously, very seriously. We have not sat back and waited for others to take care of our security. Since joining the alliance, Estonia—Estonian soldiers have consistently defended the freedom of others: in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and most recently in the Central African Republic. We dedicate sufficient resources to defense and are consistently increasing our national defense capacity.

We are grateful to the United States for sending troops here and for actively participating in the Baltic air policing mission. Your presence underlies the credibility of NATO's article 5. Without a doubt, your bilateral contributions have helped set an example for other NATO allies. A robust and visible allied presence here in Estonia is the best way of discouraging any possible aggressors. We look forward to the NATO summit tomorrow confirming this.

But we face a completely new security situation in Europe, and we are pleased that this is reflected in many of the summit's documents. We expect the NATO summit in Wales to adopt the readiness action plan that will guide allied nations for years to come through a set of practical steps and measures of reassurance and deterrence.

In addition to our close defense cooperation, I am also pleased that our bilateral relations are strong in many, many other areas, including and especially cyber and energy security.

Globally, we are working together to promote our common values: democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Estonia is a world leader in Internet freedom and in e-governance. We have a liberal economy offering many exciting opportunities for increased trade, cooperation, and investment. And this is also one reason why I believe—we believe that T–TIP is a crucial, crucial effort on the part of

both the European Union and the United States.

And let me once again welcome President Obama to Estonia, to Northern Europe, one of Europe's most prosperous and successful regions. Our countries share common values and interests, and I'm certain that together we can and will contribute to the vision of a Europe whole, free and at peace.

Thank you.

President Obama. Well, *tere päevast.* To President Ilves, I want to thank you and the people of Estonia for welcoming me here today. It is a great honor to be in Estonia, especially as we mark our 10th anniversary as NATO allies.

Mr. President, thank you for being such an outstanding partner. I was proud to welcome you to the White House last year, and we've spoken since on the situation in Ukraine. Your life reflects the story of your nation: the son of refugees who returned home to help chart a path for a free and democratic Estonia. As many of you know, that long journey also took Toomas and his family to America, to New Jersey, where they still remember him as "Tom." And it was wonderful to meet your daughter today and find out she had gone back to New Jersey as well. He says that he "knew Bruce Springsteen before he had his first record." So you embody the deep ties between Americans and Estonians. I want to thank you for your friendship.

I've come here today because Estonia is one of the great success stories among the nations that reclaimed their independence after the cold war. You've built a vibrant democracy and new prosperity, and you've become a model for how citizens can interact with their government in the 21st century, something President Ilves has championed. With their digital IDs, Estonians can use their smartphones to get just about anything done online, from their children's grades to their health records. I should have called the Estonians when we were setting up our health care website.

Most of all, I'm here because Estonia has been a model ally. Estonian forces have served with courage and skill in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we honor our servicemembers who made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan, including nine brave Estonians. As NATO nears the end of our combat mission in 3 months, I want to thank Estonia for the commitments you have made to help sustain Afghan security forces going forward.

As a high-tech leader, Estonia is also playing a leading role in protecting NATO from cyber threats. Estonia contributes its full share—its full 2 percent of GDP—to the defense of our alliance. In other words, Estonia meets its responsibilities. And as we head into the NATO summit in Wales, Estonia is an example of how every NATO member needs to do its fair share for our collective defense.

So I've come here, first and foremost, to reaffirm the commitment of the United States to the security of Estonia. As NATO allies, we have article 5 duties to our collective defense. That is a commitment that is unbreakable. It is unwavering. It is eternal. And Estonia will never stand alone.

As President, I've made sure that we are fulfilling that promise. Early in my Presidency, I urged our alliance to update our contingency planning for the defense of this region, and additional NATO forces began rotating through the Baltics, including Estonia, for more training and exercises. In response to Russia's actions in Ukraine earlier this year, the United States increased our presence further. We have contributed additional aircraft to the Baltic air policing mission, a mission to which 14 other NATO allies have also contributed over the past decade. And we're now continuously rotating additional personnel and aircraft through the Baltics. I look forward to joining Prime Minister Roivas in thanking our servicemembers later today.

On my visit to Warsaw this spring, I announced a new initiative to bolster the American military presence here in Europe, including in the Baltics, and we're working with Congress to make sure that we deliver. Today I can announce that this initiative will include additional Air Force units and aircraft for training exercises here in the Nordic-Baltic region. And we agree with our Estonian allies that an ideal

location to host and support these exercises would be Amari Air Base here in Estonia. With the support of Congress and our Estonian friends, I'm confident that we can make this happen. And I look forward to discussing this further when we meet with Presidents Berzins and Grybauskaite this afternoon.

As President Ilves indicated, we spend a great deal of time on Russia's aggression against Ukraine. I'll have much more to say about this in my speech today. For now, I just want to commend Estonia, including President Ilves, for being such a strong voice both in NATO and the EU on behalf of the Ukrainian people. Estonia has provided assistance as Ukrainians work to strengthen their democratic institutions and reform their economy. And because we've stood together, Russia is paying a heavy price for its actions, and NATO is poised to do more to help Ukraine strengthen its forces and defend their country.

And more broadly, I want to commend Estonia for being such a strong leader beyond NATO. Whether it's contributing forces to the EU mission in the Central African Republic or supporting relief efforts for the Syrian people, helping nations like Tunisia in their own transition to democracy or standing up for Internet freedom and human rights, this nation of 1.3 million people, as we say, truly punches above its weight. The world is better for it, and it's yet another reason why the United States will always be proud to stand with our ally, Estonia.

Finally, I want to say that today the prayers of the American people are with the family of a devoted and courageous journalist, Steven Sotloff. Overnight, our Government determined that, tragically, Steven was taken from us in a horrific act of violence. We cannot even begin to imagine the agony that everyone who loved Steven is feeling right now, especially his mother, his father, and his younger sister. So today our country grieves with them.

Like Jim Foley before him, Steve's life stood in sharp contrast to those who have murdered him so brutally. They make the absurd claim that they kill in the name of religion, but it was Steven, his friends say, who deeply loved the Islamic world. His killers try to claim that they defend the oppressed, but it was Steven who traveled across the Middle East, risking his life to tell the story of Muslim men and women demanding justice and dignity.

Whatever these murderers think they'll achieve by killing innocent Americans like Steven, they have already failed. They have failed because, like people around the world, Americans are repulsed by their barbarism. We will not be intimidated. And their horrific acts only unite us as a country and stiffen our resolve to take the fight against these terrorists. And those who make the mistake of harming Americans will learn that we will not forget and that our reach is long and that justice will be served.

Mr. President.

President Ilves. Well, I thought we could open things up for some questions, I understand, two from Estonian journalists and two from President Obama's entourage. As the host, I'll give the first opportunity to one of our tough questioners, Aarne Rannamäe.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Yes, thank you. Aarne Rannamäe, Estonian Public Broadcasting. I have the same question to both Presidents. The partnership between Russia and NATO is not the same, as we all know. Why to keep actually it alive, the agreement signed in 1997 between Russia and NATO? Perhaps it would push or give some new opportunities to our region's security in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

President Ilves. Well, from our side, first of all, NATO did decide to freeze its relations with Russia several months ago. But on the issue in terms of what is the—what are the implications of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, I suggest all those who say we can't do anything because of the NATO-Russia Founding Act read the NATO-Russia Founding Act, which says that these conditions hold—to quote—"in the current and foreseeable" future, or "the security environment of the current and foreseeable" future. That was the security environment of 1997, when Boris Yeltsin was President and there had been no violations of either

the U.N. Charter or the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, the 1990 Paris Charter.

So this—I would argue this is an unforeseen and new security environment, and therefore, one has, I mean, to hold on to certain provisions. It does not mean we have to give up the whole act, but certainly, when an agreement in certain parts no longer holds, well, then it's time to make a change.

I mean, the NATO-Russia Founding Act has been violated by Russia. We continue to support the vision of that document, but its substance has changed dramatically, and I am confident that all of NATO's actions are and will be conducted in accordance with its international commitments as an alliance.

President Obama. The circumstances clearly have changed. And I think this will be a topic of discussion in Wales. Beyond the issue of that particular document, our top priority has been to make sure that there is no ambiguity when it comes to our article 5 commitments to our NATO allies. And as a consequence of the rotations that have been increased, the presence of U.S. troops in the course of those rotations and additional NATO allies, what we want to send a clear message to everyone is, is that we take those commitments seriously.

And I think what's going to be clear during the course of this summit is that, given the changed landscape, not only do we have to make sure that these rotations are effective and designed towards current threats, but more broadly, NATO has to look at its defense capabilities as a whole and make sure that they are updated and properly resourced. For, I think, a certain period of time there was a complacency here in Europe about the demands that were required to make sure that NATO was able to function effectively. My former Secretary of Defense, I think, came here and gave some fairly sharp speeches repeatedly about the need for making certain that every NATO member was doing its fair share. I think Secretary General Rasmussen, during the course of his tenure, continually emphasized the need for us to upgrade our joint capabilities.

And obviously, what's happened in Ukraine is tragic, but I do think it gives us an opportunity to look with fresh eyes and understand what it is that's necessary to make sure that our NATO commitments are met. And that's one of the reasons that I'm here in Estonia today.

I'm going to call on Ann Compton [ABC News]. Ann is on her farewell tour.

U.S. Strategy To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Now that you say a second American has been slain, what is your response? Will airstrikes continue inside Iraq? Might they expand into Syria? Will you have a full strategy now on ISIS which will satisfy those like Prime Minister Cameron, who call it an imminent threat to all the interests? And will it satisfy some of your supporters like Senator Feinstein, who fears that on this you may have been too cautious? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, keep in mind that from the outset, the moment that ISIS went into Mosul, we were very clear that this was a very serious threat not just to Iraq, but to the region and to U.S. interests. And so we've been putting forward a strategy since that time that was designed to do a number of things: number one, to make sure that Americans were protected in Iraq, in our Embassies, in our consulates; number two, that we worked with Iraqis to create a functioning Government that was inclusive and that could serve as the basis for Iraq to begin to go on the offensive.

And the airstrikes that we've conducted in support of protecting Americans conducting humanitarian missions and providing space for the Iraqi Government to form have borne fruit. We've seen that in Sinjar Mountain. We've seen it most recently in the town of Amerli, which heroically held out against a siege by ISIL. We're seeing progress in the formation of an inclusive Sunni-Shia-Kurd central Government. And so what we've seen is the strategy that we've laid out moving effectively.

But what I've said from the start is, is that this is not going to be a 1-week or 1-month or 6-month proposition. Because of what's happened in the vacuum of Syria, as well as the battle-hardened elements of ISIS that grew out

of Al Qaida in Iraq during the course of the Iraq war, it's going to take time for us to be able to roll them back. And it is going to take time for us to be able to form the regional coalition that's going to be required so that we can reach out to Sunni tribes in some of the areas that ISIS has occupied and make sure that we have allies on the ground in combination with the airstrikes that we've already conducted.

So the bottom line is this: Our objective is clear, and that is to degrade and destroy ISIL so that it's no longer a threat not just to Iraq, but also to the region and to the United States. In order for us to accomplish that, the first phase has been to make sure that we've got an Iraqi Government that's in place and that we are blunting the momentum that ISIL was carrying out. And the airstrikes have done that.

But now what we need to do is make sure that we've got the regional strategy in place that can support an ongoing effort—not just in the air, but on the ground—to move that forward.

And last week, when this question was asked, I was specifically referring to the possibility of the military strategy inside of Syria that might require congressional approval. It is very important from my perspective that when we send our pilots in to do a job, that we know that this is a mission that's going to work, that we're very clear on what our objectives are, what our targets are; we've made the case to Congress, and we've made the case to the American people; and we've got allies behind us so that it's not just a one-off, but it's something that over time is going to be effective.

And so the bottom line is this, Ann: It's not only that we're going to be bringing to justice those who perpetrated this terrible crime against these two fine young men. More broadly, the United States will continue to lead a regional and international effort against the kind of barbaric and ultimately empty vision that ISIL represents. And that's going to take some time, but we're going to get it done. I'm very confident of it.

Q. Just to be clear, did you just say that the—your strategy is to destroy ISIS or to simply contain them or push them back?

President Obama. Well, we're going to—our objective is to make sure that ISIL is not a ongoing threat to the region. And we can accomplish that. It's going to take some time, and it's going to take some effort. As we've seen with Al Qaida, there are always going to be remnants that can cause havoc of any of these networks, in part because of the nature of terrorist activities. You get a few individuals, and they may be able to carry out a terrorist act.

But what we can do is to make sure that the kind of systemic and broad-based aggression that we've seen out of ISIL that terrorizes primarily Muslims—Shia, Sunni—terrorizes Kurds, terrorizes not just Iraqis, but people throughout the region, that that is degraded to the point where it is no longer the kind of factor that we've seen it being over the last several months.

President Ilves. Argo Ideon.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization/Ukraine/International Sanctions Against Russia

Q. Argo Ideon. Estonian daily newspaper, Postimees. My question is also for both Presidents. Ukraine is facing a difficult time, and the situation on the ground may become even more complicated in the runup to the parliamentary elections there in October. In your view, what more could be done and should be done to support Ukraine politically, economically, and also from a security point of view? What do you think about the idea of providing Ukrainian Armed Forces with weapons to counter Russia's attack in the east of the country more effectively? Thank you.

President Ilves. Well, most importantly, Ukraine needs above all continued political support. And that's—from that support comes decisions that involve everything else: economic aid, humanitarian aid, and also military aid. So—and from that come also decisions on equipment.

In Wales, the NATO-Ukraine committee will gather and will decide how to increase NATO defense cooperation with Ukraine. This is the kind of decision that we at the—we in NATO take together. On the humanitarian side, we have doubled our humanitarian and development assistance. In looking for what

more we can do, we have already brought wounded, seriously wounded Ukrainian soldiers to our top-notch rehabilitation center here and will continue to do so. That is certainly one thing that is—we know the Ukrainians lack that and we have it at a superbly high level, and also, I should add quickly, that with the assistance with the United States and the Walter Reed Hospital that we have this here.

The next couple of months leading up to the parliamentary elections will be very tricky. Russia, I predict, will do everything in its power to undermine the elections. We saw this already in the case of the Presidential elections. It will try to destabilize the Government in Kiev and to keep Ukraine forces from regaining ground in the east. So we should be prepared for a tough several—or a month, month and a half. The next Government, of course—that will be then will have the full legitimacy that comes with the new parliamentary elections—must show that it is a clear and better alternative to the one that the people of Ukraine ousted half a year ago.

And I also see that making sure—ensuring that the elections are carried out in a free and fair manner will be a topmost priority for us, for the OSCE. And I think one of the issues should be, in fact, the kind of interference that we saw in the Presidential elections, that not be allowed or be fully, fully addressed and recognized by the monitoring of the elections. I think that we all—after especially the Presidential elections, we all know what the Russians—Russian forces can do to disrupt the democratic process. And I think we should be far better prepared to document all of that when we get to the elections.

President Obama. Political support is absolutely vital. And one of our goals at the summit over the next several days is to once again project unity across NATO on behalf of Ukraine's efforts to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The sanctions that we've applied so far have had a real effect on Russia. And I think it's important for us to continue to impose costs on Russia so long as it is violating basic principles of international law. And so far at least, we've been able to combine efforts between Europe and the United States and some of our allies around the world, and the results are a Russian economy that is effectively contracting, capital flight putting a burden on the Russian economy, that at the moment may be overridden by politics inside of Russia as a consequence of state-run propaganda, but over time, will point to the fact that this is a strategy that's not serving Russia well, in addition to not serving Ukraine, obviously, well.

Beyond that, the Ukrainian economy is something that we have been paying a lot of attention to. We helped work with the IMF to ensure that Ukraine had the resources to get through some of the emergency financing issues that they had to deal with, but we're going to have more work to do.

The military efforts that had been required to deal with Russian-financed, Russian-armed, Russian-trained, Russian-supported, and often Russian-directed separatists has meant that—has meant a drain on the Ukrainian economy, not to mention the fact that you have major industrial areas inside of Ukraine that obviously have been impacted by the conflict there.

So we're going to have to make sure that the international community stands behind the Ukrainian economy in the short term, even as we encourage and advise and work with Ukraine to carry out some of the basic reforms that are going to be required in order for them to achieve the kinds of models of success that we've seen in Estonia and Poland and other places. And that's a tough row to hoe. It took a couple of decades for some of the countries who are currently in the EU to achieve the sort of market-based reforms that have led to such great prosperity.

Ukraine is not going to be able to do that overnight, but we have to make sure that we are helping build a bridge towards that new future. And if we combine those efforts with a commitment to continuing the NATO-Ukraine military relationship—they are not a member of NATO, but we have consistently worked with their military in terms of training and support—then I think that not only will Ukraine feel that in words we are behind them, but

they'll see that in deed we are working with them as well.

Steve Holland of Reuters.

Ukraine/North Atlantic Treaty Organization/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. Thank you, sir. Just following up on Ann: Will you have this military strategy on ISIS ready for discussion with NATO allies this week? And in your view, what should NATO be prepared to do to take on Islamic State? Lastly, how much stock do you put in this reported cease-fire between Ukraine and Russia? How do you assess Putin's motives?

President Obama. It's too early to tell what this cease-fire means. We haven't seen any details; we've just seen a couple of wire reports. We have consistently supported the effort of President Poroshenko to achieve a meaningful cease-fire that could lead to a political settlement of the conflict.

So far, it hasn't held, either because Russia has not been serious about it or has pretended that it's not controlling the separatists; and the separatists, when they've thought it was to their advantage, have not abided by the cease-fire. So we haven't seen a lot of follow-up on so-called announced cease-fires.

Having said that, if in fact Russia is prepared to stop financing, arming, training—in many cases joining with Russian troops—activities in Ukraine and is serious about a political settlement, that is something that we all hope for.

I've said consistently, our preference is a strong, productive, cooperative Russia. But the way to achieve that is by abiding to international norms, to improving the economy, to focusing on how they can actually produce goods and services that other people want and give opportunity to their people and educate them. That's not the path that they've been pursuing over the last several years. It's certainly not in evidence when it comes to their strategy in Ukraine.

I'll leave it up to others to interpret Mr. Putin's psychology on this. But in terms of actions, what we've seen is aggression and appeals to nationalist sentiments that have historically been very dangerous in Europe and are rightly a cause of concern.

So there's an opportunity here. Let's see if there's follow-up. In my discussions with President Poroshenko, I've consistently said that he needs to follow up on the kinds of reforms that he proposed so that eastern Ukraine feels as if it is fairly represented and that Russian-language speakers are protected against discrimination. These are all things that are part of his platform. We encourage them to move forward. But no realistic political settlement can be achieved if, effectively, Russia says, "We are going to continue to send tanks and troops and arms and advisers under the guise of separatists who are not homegrown, and the only possible settlement is if Ukraine cedes its territory or its sovereignty or its ability to make its own decisions about its security and its economic future."

With respect to Iraq, we will be discussing this topic. Even before ISIL dominated the headlines, one of the concerns that we have had is the development of terrorist networks and organizations, separate and apart from Al Qaida, whose focus oftentimes is regional and who are combining terrorist tactics with the tactics of small armies. And we've seen ISIS to be the first one that has broken through, but we anticipated this a while back, and it was reflected in my West Point speech.

So one of our goals is to get NATO to work with us to help create the kinds of partnerships regionally that can combat not just ISIL, but these kinds of networks as they arise and potentially destabilize allies and partners of ours in the region.

Already, we've seen NATO countries recognize the severity of this problem, that it is going to be a long-run problem. Immediately, they've dedicated resources to help us with humanitarian airdrops, to provide arms to the Peshmerga and to the Iraqi security forces. And we welcome those efforts. What we hope to do at the NATO summit is to make sure that we are more systematic about how we do it, that we're more focused about how we do it.

NATO is unique in the annals of history as a successful alliance. But we have to recognize that threats evolve, and threats have evolved as a consequence of what we've seen in Ukraine, but threats are also evolving in the Middle East that have a direct effect on Europe.

And to go back to what I said earlier to Ann, we know that if we are joined by the international community, we can continue to shrink ISIL's sphere of influence, its effectiveness, its financing, its military capabilities to the point where it is a manageable problem. And the question is going to be making sure we've got the right strategy, but also making sure that we've got the international will to do it. This is something that is a continuation of a problem we've seen certainly since 9/11, but before. And it continues to metastasize in different ways.

And what we've got to do is make sure that we are organizing the Arab world, the Middle East, the Muslim world along with the international community to isolate this cancer, this particular brand of extremism that is, first and foremost, destructive to the Muslim world and the Arab world and North Africa, and the people who live there. They're the ones who are most severely affected. They're the ones who are constantly under threat of being killed. They're the ones whose economies are completely upended to the point where they can't produce their own food and they can't produce the kinds of goods and services to sell in the world marketplace. And they're falling behind because of this very small and narrow, but very dangerous, segment of the population. And we've got to combat it in a sustained, effective way. And I'm confident we're going to be able to do that. All right?

Thank you very much. I appreciate it, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:59 a.m. at the Bank of Estonia. In his remarks, the President referred to Juulia Kristiine Ilves, daughter of President Ilves; musician Bruce Springsteen; Prime Minister Taavi Roivas of Estonia; President Andris Berzins of Latvia; President Dalia Grybauskaite of Lithuania; Steven Sotloff, a freelance journalist killed by members of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization in Syria on September 2, his parents Shirley and Arthur Sotloff, and his sister Lauren Sotloff; James W. Foley, a freelance journalist killed by members of ISIL on August 19; and former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. President Ilves referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), an alternative designation for ISIL; and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). A reporter referred to Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Toomas Hendrik Ilves of Estonia, President Dalia Grybauskaite of Lithuania, and President Andris Berzins of Latvia in Tallinn

September 3, 2014

President Ilves. Let me just say that it has been a genuine honor and pleasure to host this multilateral meeting of President Obama, President Grybauskaite, and President Berzins here in Tallinn today, a day before the NATO summit. American engagement in our region's security runs deep. Twenty years ago, Russian troops left the Baltic States. Ten years ago, Russian troops left—we joined NATO. And we've all—we've reached all of those historic milestones thanks to very strong U.S. support and leadership.

Our defense and security cooperation is extremely close. We appreciate the immediate steps that the United States has taken to demonstrate solidarity with our three countries, with Poland and Romania. In the past months, we have seen an increased U.S. air, ground, and naval presence in our region as well as an enhancement of scheduled exercises.

The four of us share a common vision and goals for the upcoming NATO summit. We face a completely new security situation in Europe, and we're pleased that this is reflected in many of the summit's documents. We expect the summit to adopt the readiness action plan that will guide allied nations for years to come through a set of practical steps and measures of reassurance and deterrence.

We expect it to provide a solid framework for allies to contribute to a stronger NATO presence on its eastern border. Maintaining a persistent presence in this region should include, among other things, increasing the readiness of the Multinational Corps Northeast in Poland and giving it more responsibilities for matters of collective defense. This would help facilitate NATO's rapid reaction in our region and bolster security on NATO's periphery.

A good part of our discussion today obviously focused on Ukraine. We need to think about what more can be done to support this country. Estonia has doubled its humanitarian and development assistance and is looking for ways to do more, including assisting wounded soldiers from Ukraine here in our rehabilitation center. But we should not also—we should not forget about the other so-called Eastern Partnership companies—countries. Countries like Georgia and Moldova should not be left on their own as we focus on Ukraine. They must have the right to make their own decisions, their own security arrangements and alliances. Continued U.S. support for these countries' engagement in the region is of vital importance.

We also believe in maintaining a strong transatlantic link in other areas, such as cyber and energy security. But over the year—the past year, our cooperation on cyber issues has strengthened and now covers many areas on both civilian and military levels. I keep no tally of cyber attacks, hacks, and espionage, but it is absolutely clear that cybersecurity has become a concern for all of us to a degree we have never seen before, a domain of warfare in the same category as land, sea, and air.

There is no doubt that the security architecture here in Europe has changed in the past year and, alas, not for the better. How it will look in a year is difficult to predict given the unpredictability of so many of the actions we have seen. But I can confidently predict that whatever the future does hold, the Baltic countries and the United States are working together globally to promote our common values: democracy, human rights, rule of law, freedom, and especially, Internet freedom.

Thank you.

President Grybauskaite. So we had important meeting because we do have in our region today American President, and this means a lot not only for our region and security of our region, but a signal before the summit, NATO summit, for all Europe.

Today, what's happening on Ukraine's soil—the open aggression from Russian side against sovereign country—means that the recent attack, not only against Ukraine, it is an attack against the peace and borders of Europe after Second World War.

Why? Today, Ukraine is fighting not only for its own freedom, but it's fighting instead of us, for us. So why it is so important our full pledge to support Ukrainian sovereignty, support of the fight against aggression? And of course, we need to think about further improvement of security in our region. And we appreciate all the United States bilateral commitments and NATO's commitments for our region, for the NATO members, and article 5 commitments.

Why today standing here? We very clearly know what we want from NATO summit tomorrow, what kind of measures improving our security we ask for: an updated standing defense plans, additional NATO and U.S. presence in our region, rapid reaction force, and other measures necessary to improve and secure our region's security.

So today and tomorrow, we are talking and solving the future peace and security of Europe. Why? Our responsibility lies on our shoulders, not only thinking about our region, about our countries, but also about Ukraine.

Ukraine today is in frontline for all of us, and we need to take this very seriously and responsibly, helping Ukraine in every measure available in our hands.

President Berzins. Thank you, President Ilves, for the warm welcome. President Obama, welcome to the Baltics. At the beginning, I condemn the killing of American Steven Sotloff and express my condolences for—to his family and friends. We express our support and solidarity with the U.S. in the fight with terrorists in Iraq and elsewhere.

Today's meeting proves a strategic partnership of the Baltic States and the United States. Last year, we met at the White House. This meeting should be continued not less than annually. Security cooperation based on shared values is a foundation of our relations.

I thank President Obama for the American leadership. Your support, the European reinforcement initiative is very important for our region's security. I'm confident that the U.S. Congress will pass it without delay. I commend the U.S. in providing troop presence in the Baltic region. We would like to see the U.S. troops and equipment in Latvia as long as necessary. We support U.S. efforts to consolidate firm international response against Russia's invasion in Ukraine. We must realize that to stop further aggression, solidarity in speaking with one voice is a key.

Today we discussed the NATO Wales summit. The summit will need a clear message about reinforcing collective defense. We'll accept complete measures to ensure troop presence, infrastructure, and command structure in the Baltic region.

Transatlantic relations and the U.S. presence in Europe is crucial for the Euro-Atlantic security. Europe too has to invest more in defense. Latvia will increase defense spending to 2 percent of GDP by 2020. The Parliament of Latvia has passed a special law on it. Answering the challenge of information war, Latvia will host the NATO Center of Excellence for Strategic Communication.

During the summit, we will discuss what NATO can do together to eradicate the greatest source of terrorism in the Middle East: militant fighters of the Islamic State.

Together, we go ahead with the Baltic-U.S. cybersecurity partnership that we started last year in Washington. We reaffirm our commitment to the strategic Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations. We need to work as fast as possible to enable the signing of this agreement.

We wish to develop a real transatlantic bond between Europe and the U.S. on energy. Recent developments in Ukraine are the further proof of the urgency to reduce dependency on one supplier. Thereby, the U.S. involvement is very important for our efforts to make strong energy security and develop integrated energy markets in the region. I would also benefit—it would also benefit both the European and American economic interests.

I'd like to convey my gratitude to our friends and partners for the significant contribution and support in opening the OECD membership talks with Latvia. The Baltic States and the U.S. have a shared interest in supporting economic development and good governance in the EU Eastern Partnership countries and in Central Asia. This will be main priority during Latvia's Presidency in the Council of the EU next year.

Finally, I would like to stress that the Baltic States and the U.S. are natural partners bound by a shared belief in democratic governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and civil liberties.

Thank you.

President Obama. Well, good afternoon, everybody. I am the final speaker, so I will be brief.

I want to thank President Ilves for hosting us today, especially in these magnificent surroundings, which speak to the long and diverse history of this country and the endurance of the Estonian people. And I want to thank my colleagues, Dalia and Andris, for coming here for this important meeting.

As has been indicated already, we last met as a group a year ago, and I was pleased to host our three Baltic allies at the White House. The four of us spoke more recently to discuss the situation in Ukraine. And my main message today is the same as it was last year at the White House: The Baltic nations are among our most reliable allies in NATO, and the commitment

of the United States to their security is rock solid.

More recently, we've demonstrated our commitment to the additional American aircraft that have joined NATO's Baltic air patrols, and we've demonstrated our commitment in the additional training exercises that our forces are now conducting. And we've demonstrated our commitment to the additional American forces that are now continuously rotating through Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. So here in the Baltics, the United States has stepped up its presence.

And we are working to do even more. As I announced earlier, the initiative I've proposed to bolster the American military presence in Europe would include additional Air Force units and aircraft for training exercises here in the Nordic-Baltic region, with all three of these allies. And the NATO summit in Wales will be an opportunity to bring the alliance together around a plan to enhance our readiness even further, including infrastructure and facilities here in the Baltics capable of handling rapid reinforcements.

So the bottom line is this: As NATO allies, we will meet our solemn duty, our article 5 obligation to our collective defense. And today I want every Estonian and Latvian and Lithuanian to know that you will never stand alone.

I want to thank all of these leaders for coming here today. I'd close with this observation. Nearly a hundred years ago, the United States recognized the independence of the Baltic nations. And for 50 years, you've endured a brutal Soviet occupation. In all those years, the United States never recognized that illegal occupation. All those years—even as your flags of independence were often banned here at home—your Embassies stayed open in the United States, and your flags flew proudly alongside ours. They always will. Because the United States intends to always stand with you.

So thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3:22 p.m. in the Kadriorg Art Museum. In his remarks, President Berzins referred to Steven Sotloff, a freelance journalist who was killed by members of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization in Syria on September 2.

Remarks at Nordea Concert Hall in Tallinn
September 3, 2014

Thank you. Thank you so much. Hello, Estonia! *Tere, Eesti!* Thank you, Oskar, for your wonderful introduction and for representing the talent and the energy and the optimism of today's Estonia, especially its young people. And Oskar is sitting next to his father, and his father and I agree that we're getting gray, so we have to make sure that somebody is coming up behind us. Please give Oskar a big round of applause for the great job that he did.

To President Ilves and distinguished guests, to the people of Estonia: It is a great pleasure to be with you in this historic city, in this beautiful land. I thank you for the incredible hospitality that you've shown me today. I understand the weather is always like this. [*Laughter*] My only regret is that I missed this summer's Laulupidu. And I'll try to come back next time and catch it. I bring with me the friendship of the American people, and I am honored to be the first President of the United States to deliver an address like this to the people of Estonia.

I just had the opportunity to meet once again with the Presidents of all the Baltic States, and I thank the President of Latvia and Lithuania for being here. We're joined by friends from throughout the region. And I want to say a special welcome to everyone watching this out in Freedom Square. And I'm especially pleased to see so many young people here today. Because, like Oskar, you are fulfilling the dream that your parents and grandparents struggled for, but could only imagine, and that is, living your lives in free and independent and democratic Baltic nations.

That dream of freedom endured through centuries of occupation and oppression. It blossomed into independence, only to have it stolen by foreign pacts and secret protocols. It survived the mass deportations that ripped parents from their children. It was defended by Forest Brothers in their resistance and sustained by poets and authors who kept alive your languages and cultures. And here in Estonia, it was a dream that found its most eloquent expression in your voices, on a grassy field not far from here, when Estonians found the courage to stand up against an empire and sing "Land of My Fathers, Land That I Love." And Heinz Valk, who is here today, spoke for the entire Singing Revolution when he said, "One day, no matter what, we will win!"

And then, exactly 25 years ago, people across the Baltics came together in one of the greatest displays of freedom and nonviolent resistance that the world has ever seen. On that August evening, perhaps 2 million people stepped out of their homes and joined hands: a human chain of freedom, the Baltic Way. And they stretched down highways and across farmlands, from Tallinn to Riga, to Vilnius. They lit candles, and they sang anthems. Old men and women brought out their flags of independence. And young parents brought their children to teach them that when ordinary people stand together, great change is possible. Here in Estonia, when people joined the line, the password was "freedom." As one man said that day: "The Berlin Wall is made of brick and concrete. Our wall is stronger." And it was.

Within months, that wall in Berlin was pushed open. The next year, the Baltic peoples finally voted in elections. And when the forces of the past made their last grab for power, you stood up. Lithuanians faced down tanks. Latvians manned barricades. Here in Tallinn, citizens rushed to the TV Tower to defend the airwaves of democracy. You won; you reclaimed your countries. And in your new Constitution you declared: "The independence and sovereignty of Estonia are timeless and inalienable."

But the people of the Baltic nations also knew that freedom needs a foundation of security. So you reached out to join the NATO alliance. And we were proud to welcome you as new allies, so that those words of your Constitution—your timeless independence—will always be guaranteed by the strongest military alliance the world has ever known.

Today, people working to build their own democracies, from Kiev to Tunis, look to you for inspiration. Your experience cautions that progress is neither easy nor quick. Here in the Baltics, after decades of authoritarian rule, the habits of democracy had to be learned. The institutions of good governance had to be built. Economies had to be reformed. Foreign forces had to be removed from your territory.

And transitions of this magnitude are daunting for any nation. But the Baltics show the world what's possible when free peoples come together for the change that they seek. And in that great contest of ideas—between freedom and authoritarianism, between liberty and oppression—your success proves, like that human chain 25 years ago, that our way will always be stronger.

We're stronger because we're democracies. We're not afraid of free and fair elections, because true legitimacy can only come from one source, and that is the people. We're not afraid of an independent judiciary, because no one is above the law. We're not afraid of a free press or vibrant debate or a strong civil society, because leaders must be held accountable. We're not afraid to let our young people go online to learn and discover and organize, because we know that countries are more successful when citizens are free to think for themselves.

We're stronger because we embrace open economies. Look at the evidence. Here in Estonia, we see the success of free markets, integration with Europe, taking on tough reforms. You've become one of the most wired countries on Earth, a global leader in e-government and high-tech startups. The entrepreneurial spirit of the Estonian people has been unleashed, and your innovations, like Skype, are transforming the world.

And we're stronger because we stand together. This year, we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Baltics in NATO. A decade ago, skeptics wondered whether your countries

were up to the task. And today, they need only look at our training exercises, where our troops grow even stronger together, shoulder to shoulder. They can look at Afghanistan, where our forces have sacrificed together to keep us safe and where, in just 3 months, the largest operation in NATO history will come to an end, as planned. There's no doubt, the Baltics have made our alliance stronger.

And your progress reflects a larger truth. Because of the work of generations, because we've stood together in a great alliance, because people across this continent have forged a European Union dedicated to cooperation and peace, we have made historic progress toward the vision we share: a Europe that is whole and free and at peace.

And yet, as we gather here today, we know that this vision is threatened by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. It is a brazen assault on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, a sovereign and independent European nation. It challenges that most basic of principles of our international system: that borders cannot be redrawn at the barrel of a gun; that nations have the right to determine their own future. It undermines an international order where the rights of peoples and nations are upheld and can't simply be taken away by brute force. This is what's at stake in Ukraine. This is why we stand with the people of Ukraine today.

Now, let's put to rest, once and for all, the distortions or outdated thinking that has caused this crisis. Our NATO alliance is not aimed "against" any other nation. We're an alliance of democracies dedicated to our own collective defense. Countries like Estonia and Latvia and Lithuania are not "post-Soviet territory." You are sovereign and independent nations with the right to make your own decisions. No other nation gets to veto your security decisions.

The protests in Ukraine, on the Maidan, were not led by neo-Nazis or Fascists. They were led by ordinary Ukrainians—men and women, young and old—who were fed up with a corrupt regime and who wanted to share in the progress and prosperity that they see in the rest of Europe. And they did not engage in an "armed seizure of power." After an agreement was brokered for constitutional reform, the former President then abandoned his office, and Parliament endorsed new elections so that today Ukrainians have a new democratically elected President. And I look forward to welcoming President Poroshenko to the Oval Office this month. He was chosen by the people of Ukraine.

It was not the Government in Kiev that destabilized eastern Ukraine, it's been the pro-Russian separatists who are encouraged by Russia, financed by Russia, trained by Russia, supplied by Russia, and armed by Russia. And the Russian forces that have now moved into Ukraine are not on a humanitarian or peacekeeping mission. They are Russian combat forces with Russian weapons in Russian tanks. Now, these are the facts. They are provable; they're not subject to dispute.

As a result of state-run propaganda, many Russians have become convinced that the actions taken by their Government is strengthening Russia. But reaching back to the days of the czars, trying to reclaim lands "lost" in the 19th century, is surely not the way to secure Russia's greatness in the 21st century. It only shows that unrestrained nationalism is the last refuge of those who cannot or will not deliver real progress and opportunity for their own people at home.

Let's also be clear where we stand. Just as we refused to accept smaller European nations being dominated by bigger neighbors in the last century, we reject any talk of spheres of influence today. And just as we never accepted the occupation and illegal annexation of the Baltic nations, we will not accept Russia's occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea or any part of Ukraine.

As free peoples, as an alliance, we will stand firm and united to meet the test of this moment, and here's how.

First, we will defend our NATO allies, and that means every ally. In this alliance, there are no old members or new members, no junior partners or senior partners. There are just allies, pure and simple. And we will defend the territorial integrity of every single ally. Today,

more NATO aircraft patrol the skies of the Baltics. More American forces are on the ground training and rotating through each of the Baltic States. More NATO ships patrol the Black Sea. Tonight I depart for the NATO summit in Wales. And I believe our alliance should extend these defensive measures for as long as necessary, because the defense of Tallinn and Riga and Vilnius is just as important as the defense of Berlin and Paris and London.

During the long Soviet occupation, the great Estonian poet Marie Under wrote a poem in which she cried to the world: "Who'll come to help? Right here, at present, now!" And I say to the people of Estonia and the people of the Baltics: Today, we are bound by our treaty alliance; we have a solemn duty to each other. Article 5 is crystal clear: An attack on one is an attack on all. So if, in such a moment, you ever ask again, "Who will come to help?," you'll know the answer: the NATO alliance, including the Armed Forces of the United States of America, "right here, [at]* present, now!" We'll be here for Estonia. We will be here for Latvia. We will be here for Lithuania. You lost your independence once before. With NATO, you will never lose it again.

Second—and in addition to the measures we've already taken—the United States is working to bolster the security of our NATO allies and further increase America's military presence in Europe. The new initiative I proposed in Warsaw this spring includes several elements, and we're working with Congress to get it done. Here in the Baltics, it would mean positioning more American equipment so it's ready if needed. It would mean more training and exercises between our militaries. And it would mean more U.S. forces, including American boots on the ground, continuously rotating through Estonia and Latvia and Lithuania.

Third, NATO forces need the ability to deploy even faster in times of crisis. Now, this week our alliance must unite around a new plan to enhance our readiness. And that means we need to step up our defense planning so we're fully prepared for any threat to any ally. It also means we need to have the infrastructure and facilities that can receive rapid reinforcements, including here in the Baltics. We need to enhance NATO's Rapid Response Force so it can deploy even more quickly and not just react to threats, but also deter them.

And even as we meet conventional threats, we need to face other challenges. And that includes propaganda campaigns that try to whip up fears and divide people from one another. We reject the idea that people cannot live and thrive together just because they have different backgrounds or speak a different language. And the best antidotes to such distorted thinking are the values that define us. Not just in the Baltics, but throughout Europe, we must acknowledge the inherent dignity and human rights of every person, because our democracies cannot truly succeed until we root out bias and prejudice, both from our institutions and from our hearts. We have to uphold a free press and freedom of speech, because in the end, lies and misinformation are no match for the truth. We have to embrace open and inclusive societies, because our countries are more successful and more prosperous when we welcome the talents of all our people, including minorities. That's part of the work that we must do. That's the example we must set.

Fourth, even as we keep our countries strong at home, we need to keep our alliance strong for the future. And that means investing in the capabilities like intelligence and surveillance and reconnaissance and missile defense. And here in Europe, nations need to do more to spur the growth and prosperity that sustains our alliance. To its great credit, Estonia stands out as an ally that contributes its full share—its full 2 percent of GDP—to the defense of our alliance. And Latvia and Lithuania have pledged to do the same. So this week—[*applause*]—that's worth applause. So this week's summit is the moment for every NATO nation to step up and commit to meeting its responsibilities to our alliance. Estonia does it; every ally must do it.

* White House correction.

Fifth, we must continue to stand united against Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Keep in mind that, repeatedly, President Putin has ignored the opportunity to resolve the crisis in Ukraine diplomatically. The United States, the European Union, our partners around the world have all said we prefer a diplomatic solution. But in light of Russia's unwillingness to seize that opportunity, we have come together to impose major sanctions on Russia for its actions. And make no mistake: Russia is paying a price. Capital is fleeing, foreign investment is plummeting, because investors know that today's Russia is a bad bet, given its behavior. The Russian economy has slipped into recession. Its energy production, which is the engine of the Russian economy, is expected to drop. Its credit rating is near junk status. The ruble just fell to an alltime low. In short, Russia's actions in Ukraine are weakening Russia. Russia's actions are hurting the Russian people.

And it doesn't have to be this way. We have no interest in weakening Russia. It's a nation with a rich history and a remarkable people. We do not seek out confrontation with Russia. Over the past two decades, the United States has gone to great lengths to welcome Russia into the community of nations and to encourage its economic success. We welcome a Russia that is strong and growing and contributes to international security and peace and that resolves disputes peacefully, with diplomacy.

And in contrast to Russia's isolation and economic woes today, that path, which would include a stable and prosperous Ukraine whose sovereignty is respected, would also ultimately result in greater success and opportunity and respect for Russia. That path remains available to Russia; that path that will deliver truer progress for the Russian people. But it's a path that starts by Russia changing course and leaving Ukraine so that Ukrainians can make their own decisions. And I have no doubt that one of their decisions would be to have strong relations with not just Europe, but also with Russia. But it has to be freely chosen.

And this brings me to the final area where our nations have to come together, in our steadfast support for those who reach for their freedom. And yes, that includes the people of Ukraine. And few understand this better than the Baltic peoples. You know from bitter experience that we can never take our security and liberties for granted. We want Ukrainians to be independent and strong and able to make their own choices free from fear and intimidation, because the more countries are free and strong and free from intimidation, the more secure our own liberties are.

So the United States will continue to help Ukraine reform, to escape a legacy of corruption and build democratic institutions, to grow its economy, and, like other European nations, diversify its energy sources, because no country should ever be held hostage to another nation that wields energy like a weapon. We'll continue to offer training and assistance to help the Ukrainian military grow stronger as they defend their country. And since ultimately there is no military solution to this crisis, we will continue to support President Poroshenko's efforts to achieve peace. Because, like all independent nations, Ukraine must be free to decide its own destiny.

And this week, NATO must send an unmistakable message in support of Ukraine as well. Our alliance has had a partnership with Ukraine for more than 20 years. Ukrainian forces have served with distinction in NATO operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan. So, in Wales, we'll meet as an alliance with President Poroshenko to show that our 28 nations are united in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and right to defend its territory.

Now, Ukraine needs more than words. NATO needs to make concrete commitments to help Ukraine modernize and strengthen its security forces. And by the way, we have to do more to help other NATO partners, including Georgia and Moldova, strengthen their defenses as well. And we must reaffirm the principle that has always guided our alliance: For countries that meet our standards and that can make meaningful contributions to allied security, the door to NATO membership will remain open.

So this is a moment of testing. The actions of the separatists in Ukraine and Russia evoke dark tactics from Europe's past that ought to be consigned to a distant history: masked men storming buildings; soldiers without flags slipping across the border; violence sending families fleeing and killing thousands, including nearly 300 innocent men, women, and children from all across Europe and around the world when that airliner was shot out of the sky. In the face of violence that seems intractable and suffering that is so senseless, it is easy to grow cynical and, I think, tempting to give in to the notion that peace and security may be beyond our grasp.

But I say to all of you here today, especially the young people: Do not give in to that cynicism; do not lose the idealism and optimism that is the root of all great change. Don't ever lose the faith that says, if we want it, if we are willing to work for it, if we stand together, the future can be different, tomorrow can be better. After all, the only reason we're here today in a free and democratic Estonia is because the Estonian people never gave up.

You never gave up when the Red Army came in from the east or when the Nazis came in from the west. You never gave up when the Soviets came back or when they sent your best and brightest to the gulag, never to return. You never gave up through a long occupation that tried to break your spirit and crush your culture. Their tanks were no equal to the moral power of your voices, united in song. Their walls were no match for the strength of your people, united in that unbreakable chain. And like the Poles and Hungarians, the Czechs and the Slovaks, and the East Germans on top of that wall, you were stronger, and you always believed, "One day, no matter what, we will win."

Today, your example, your victory, gives hope to people all over the world. Yes, there will be setbacks, and there will be frustrations, and there will be moments of doubt and moments of despair. The currents of history ebb and flow, but over time, they flow toward freedom—more people, in every corner of the Earth, standing up and reaching to claim those rights that are universal. And that's why, in the end, our ideals are stronger. And that's why, in the end, our ideals will win.

Dignity will win, because every human being is born equal, with free will and inalienable rights. And any regime or system of government that tries to deny these rights will ultimately fail, and countries that uphold them will only grow stronger.

Justice will win, because might does not make right, and the only path to lasting peace is when people know that their dignity will be respected and that their rights will be upheld. And citizens, like nations, will never settle for a world where the big are allowed to bully the small. Sooner or later, they fight back.

Democracy will win, because a government's legitimacy can only come from citizens; because in this age of information and empowerment, people want more control over their lives, not less; and because, more than any other form of government ever devised, only democracy, rooted in the sanctity of the individual, can deliver real progress.

And freedom will win, not because it's inevitable, not because it is ordained, but because these basic human yearnings for dignity and justice and democracy do not go away. They can be suppressed. At times, they can be silenced, but they burn in every human heart in a place where no regime could ever reach, a light that no army can ever extinguish. And so long as free peoples summon the confidence and the courage and the will to defend the values that we cherish, then freedom will always be stronger, and our ideas will always prevail no matter what.

Thank you, and long live our great alliance. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Oskar Poola, graduate student, Tallinn University of Technology; President Andris Berzins of Latvia; President Dalia Grybauskaite of Lithuania; artist, caricaturist, and politician Heinrich Valk; and former President Viktor Fedorovych Yanukovych of Ukraine.

Remarks With Prime Minister Taavi Roivas of Estonia to United States and Estonian Troops at Tallinn Airport Hangar in Tallinn
September 3, 2014

Prime Minister Roivas. Mr. President; commander of the Estonian Defense Forces; company of the U.S. "Sky Soldiers," Scouts Battalion, Charlie Company; ladies and gentlemen: It's my great pleasure and great honor to welcome you, Mr. President, together with your soldiers here in Tallinn.

I stand here in humility and in great pride, in front of the soldiers of our two nations. I'm proud of the Estonian soldiers, and I'm proud to see them standing beside soldiers of our ally, the United States. All those servicemen are training together here in Estonia. But you have also served side by side, far from your homes, in Afghanistan and Iraq, defending our way of life and our common values.

Through your service and sacrifice, you have strengthened our relationship. You represent those values, principles, and beliefs that symbolize our friendship. The Charlie Company in front of us is the first unit that we deployed to south Afghanistan, and coincidentally, it was the last unit that deployed to that conflict. You fought side by side as brothers-in-arms with the soldiers from America. You endured the same challenges and hardship. You, together, bore the trials of separation from loved ones with high spirit and, sadly, made the same sacrifices on the battlefield, pursuing a common mission.

We will never forget our brave men and women who gave their lives so that we can live in peace and freedom. It does not matter whether you are from—[*inaudible*]—Estonia or Plainfield, New Jersey, whether you're from Saaremaa or Hawaii, the commitment, dedication, and loyal service of you all is beyond price. The example of our soldiers, sailors, and airmen go beyond the size of our countries. They demonstrate our beliefs in the same values and principles. And through that, we both make a difference in the world. We both stand for what's right and good. We are both prepared to accept responsibility for helping to sending a powerful message that as NATO allies, we stand together again in Iraq, in Afghanistan. Our troops served shoulder to shoulder. And Americans and Estonians made the ultimate sacrifice in that mission to keep our countries safe back home.

Today, up at Amari Air Base, you're standing together again, training together, exercising together. And other members of the 173d are rotating through Latvia and Lithuania. So you're lies, we stand together, we stand as one.

ensure the freedom and prosperity of all nations that stand with us.

I thank you, Mr. President, for standing with us in Estonia. Your presence both reassures us and fuels our determination for freedom and the right to choose our own destiny. And I thank our troops for their fortitude and sacrifice to ensure that that happens.

Mr. President, thank you once more. The floor is yours.

President Obama. Well, good afternoon, everybody. And thank you, Prime Minister Rõivas, for your kind words, for your work together today, and for being a great champion of our alliance.

It's an honor to be here with some of our extraordinary servicemembers, Estonians and Americans, including the legendary 173d Airborne Brigade, the "Sky Soldiers." I just gave a long speech, so I'm not going to give another long speech. The main reason I'm here is to just shake some hands and to say thank you, because I want to join the Prime Minister in expressing to every single one of you our incredible appreciation and the deep gratitude of the Estonian people and the American people.

Nearly a hundred years ago, as Estonians fighting for independence were looking for help, Americans came here to help. Some were U.S. officers who had advised the Estonian military and helped establish the "Scouts Battalion," which is here today. Some Americans were part of the Red Cross. And some of these Americans gave their lives for Estonia's freedom.

Mr. Prime Minister, many of our American soldiers here today are also part of the 500—503d Airborne, "The Rock." They're strong. They're tough. They hold their ground. And NATO, including the United States, will defend Estonia, will defend Latvia, will defend Lithuania, will defend all of our NATO allies. Americans are proud to be at your side as you won your independence a century ago. We'll be by your side, helping you to protect that independence for the centuries to come.

So thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for being such a strong partner. And thanks to all of you for stepping forward, for putting on a uniform, for serving in this mission, which is so vital to the security of our nations. You make us proud, and we can never thank you enough.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:48 p.m. In his remarks, Prime Minister Roivas referred to Maj. Gen. Riho Terras, commander in chief, Estonian Defense Forces.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Certain Terrorist Attacks
September 4, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. Consistent with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared in Proclamation 7463 with respect to the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, is to continue in effect for an additional year.

The terrorist threat that led to the declaration on September 14, 2001, of a national emergency continues. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect after September 14, 2014, the national emergency with respect to the terrorist threat.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey in Newport, Wales
September 5, 2014

President Obama. I very much appreciate the opportunity to once again meet with Prime Minister—former Prime Minister Erdogan, now President Erdogan. And I want to congratulate him on his election victory.

President Erdogan is one of the key leaders of our alliance, and Turkey obviously serves an extraordinarily important role in the alliance in part because it is a bridge between Europe and the Middle East and the Muslim world. And in that capacity, his views on how we deal with some of the challenges arising in the southern front of NATO are very critical.

So I look forward to a very productive discussion around issues that we're both equally concerned about, principally the instability in Iraq and Syria and the emergence of ISIL as a threat to all our nations. And I want to express

my appreciation for the cooperation between U.S. and Turkish both military and intelligence services in dealing with the issue of foreign fighters, an area where we still have more work to do.

We'll also have an opportunity to discuss the humanitarian elements of the ongoing conflict in Syria, where Turkey has borne an enormous burden and has been very generous in accommodating so many people who have been displaced from their homes by the violence.

President Erdogan. Thank you. Distinguished members of the press, I'm very pleased to have this occasion to meet President Obama on the margins of the NATO leaders summit to discuss some very important developments taking place in our region, especially most recently.

We have between Turkey and the United States a very important process of model partnership. And this model partnership brings us close to each other on many issues. And on the military front, one of the most important areas of cooperation in this framework is NATO. We also have significant cooperation politically, economically, culturally, and commercially.

And we have had this time at NATO, a very important summit where there was wide discussion about a number of issues and countries, such as Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, and Ukraine. And we will now have an opportunity to discuss these issues in some depth with President Obama. And we will make best use of this opportunity to do so.

Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you, everybody. I'll see you in a bit.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:08 p.m. at the Celtic Manor Resort. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The President's News Conference in Newport
September 5, 2014

President Obama. Good afternoon. Let me begin by thanking my great friend, Prime Minister Cameron, and his entire team, for hosting this NATO summit and making it such a success. And I want to thank the people of Newport and Cardiff and the people of Wales for welcoming me and my delegation so warmly. It's a great honor to be the first sitting U.S. President to visit Wales.

We've met at a time of transition and a time of testing. After more than a decade, NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan is coming to an end. Russia's aggression against Ukraine threatens our vision of a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. In the Middle East, the terrorist threat from ISIL poses a growing danger. Here at this summit, our alliance has summoned the will, the resources, and the capabilities to meet all of these challenges.

First and foremost, we have reaffirmed the central mission of the alliance. Article 5 enshrines our solemn duty to each other: "[A]n armed attack against one . . . shall be considered an attack against them all." This is a binding treaty obligation. It is nonnegotiable. And here in Wales, we've left absolutely no doubt: We will defend every ally.

Second, we agreed to be resolute in reassuring our allies in Eastern Europe. Increased NATO air patrols over the Baltics will continue. Rotations of additional forces throughout Eastern Europe for training and exercises will continue. Naval patrols in the Black Sea will continue. And all 28 NATO nations agreed to contribute to all of these measures for as long as necessary.

Third, to ensure that NATO remains prepared for any contingency, we agreed to a new readiness action plan. The alliance will update its defense planning. We will create a new highly ready Rapid Response Force that can be deployed on very short notice. We'll increase NATO's presence in Central and Eastern Europe with additional equipment, training, exercises, and troop rotations. And the $1 billion initiative that I announced in Warsaw will be a strong and ongoing U.S. contribution to this plan.

Fourth, all 28 NATO nations have pledged to increase their investments in defense and to move toward investing 2 percent of their GDP in our collective security. These resources will help NATO invest in critical capabilities, including intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and missile defense. And this commitment makes clear that NATO will not be complacent. Our alliance will reverse the decline in defense spending and rise to meet the challenges that we face in the 21st century.

Fifth, our alliance is fully united in support of Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity and its right to defend itself. To back up this commitment, all 28 NATO allies will now provide security assistance to Ukraine. This includes nonlethal support to the Ukrainian military, like body armor, fuel, and medical care for wounded Ukrainian troops, as well as assistance to help modernize Ukrainian forces, including logistics and command and control.

Here in Wales, we also sent a strong message to Russia that actions have consequences. Today the United States and Europe are finalizing measures to deepen and broaden our sanctions across Russia's financial, energy, and defense sectors. At the same time, we strongly support President Poroshenko's efforts to pursue a peaceful resolution to the conflict in his country. The cease-fire announced today can advance that goal, but only if there is follow-through on the ground. Pro-Russian separatists must keep their commitments, and Russia must stop its violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Beyond Europe, we pay tribute to all those from our ISAF mission, including more than 2,200 Americans, who have given their lives for our security in Afghanistan. NATO's combat mission ends in 3 months, and we are prepared to transition to a new mission focused on training, advising, and assisting Afghan security forces. Both Presidential candidates have pledged to sign the bilateral security agreement that would be the foundation of our continued cooperation. But, as we all know, the outcome of the recent election must be resolved. And so we continue to urge the two Presidential candidates to make the compromises that are necessary so Afghans can move forward together and form a sovereign, united, and democratic nation.

Finally, we reaffirmed that the door to NATO membership remains open to nations that can meet our high standards. We agreed to expand the partnership that makes NATO the hub of global security. We're launching a new effort with our closest partners, including many that have served with us in Afghanistan, to make sure our forces continue to operate together. And we'll create a new initiative to help countries build their defense capabilities, starting with Georgia, Moldova, Jordan, and Libya.

I also leave here confident that NATO allies and partners are prepared to join in a broad, international effort to combat the threat posed by ISIL. Already, allies have joined us in Iraq, where we have stopped ISIL's advances; we've equipped our Iraqi partners and helped them go on offense. NATO has agreed to play a role in providing security and humanitarian assistance to those who are on the front lines. Key NATO allies stand ready to confront this terrorist threat through military, intelligence, and law enforcement as well as diplomatic efforts. And Secretary Kerry will now travel to the region to continue building the broad-based coalition that will enable us to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL.

So, taken together, I think the progress we've achieved in Wales makes it clear that our alliance will continue to do whatever is necessary to ensure our collective defense and to protect our citizens.

So with that, let me take a few questions. I'll start with Julie Pace of Associated Press.

Ukraine/International Sanctions Against Russia/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to go back to the situation in Ukraine. If this cease-fire does take effect and appears to be holding, would you and your European counterparts back away from these sanctions that you say you've prepared? Or do you feel that it's important to levy these sanctions regardless of this cease-fire agreement? And if I could go

back to the Rapid Response Force, can you say specifically what U.S. contributions will be in terms of troop numbers and equipment? Is it beyond the agreement that you announced—or the proposal you announced in Warsaw?

President Obama. With respect to the cease-fire agreement, obviously, we are hopeful, but based on past experience also skeptical that, in fact, the separatists will follow through and the Russians will stop violating Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. So it has to be tested.

And I know that the Europeans are discussing at this point the final shape of their sanctions measures. It's my view that if you look at President Poroshenko's plan, it is going to take some time to implement. And as a consequence, for us to move forward based on what is currently happening on the ground with sanctions—while acknowledging that if in fact the elements of the plan that has been signed are implemented, then those sanctions could be lifted—is a more likely way for us to ensure that there's follow-through. But that's something that obviously we'll consult closely with our European partners to determine.

I do want to point out, though, that the only reason that we're seeing this cease-fire at this moment is because of both the sanctions that have already been applied and the threat of further sanctions, which are having a real impact on the Russian economy and have isolated Russia in a way that we have not seen in a very long time.

The path for Russia to rejoin the community of nations that respects international law is still there, and we encourage President Putin to take it. But the unity and the firmness that we've seen in the trans-Atlantic alliance in supporting Ukraine and applying sanctions has been, I think, a testimony to how seriously people take the basic principle that big countries can't just stomp on little countries or force them to change their policies and give up their sovereignty.

So I'm very pleased with the kind of work that's been done throughout this crisis in Ukraine, and I think U.S. leadership has been critical throughout that process.

With respect to the Rapid Response Forces and the readiness action plan that we've put forward, in Warsaw, I announced $1 billion in our initiative. A sizeable portion of that will be devoted to implementing various aspects of this readiness action plan.

We've already increased obviously rotations of personnel in the Baltic States, for example. We have the air policing. We have the activities that are taking place in the Baltic and the Black Sea. But this allows us to supplement it. It allows us to coordinate it and integrate it further with additional contributions from other partners. And what it signifies is NATO's recognition that, in light of recent Russian actions as well as rhetoric, we want to make it crystal clear: We mean what we say when we're talking about our article 5 commitments. And an increased presence serves as the most effective deterrent to any additional Russian aggression that we might see.

Angela Keane, Bloomberg.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization/U.S. Efforts To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/U.S. Counterterrorism Efforts in Somalia

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. What are your specific expectations for what regional actors like Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Jordan can legitimately provide to a coalition against Islamic State? Is there a role there for Iran as well? As you know, Secretary Kerry today said that he expects the allied countries to coalesce around a specific plan by the end of September. Do you agree with the timeline that he set out? And what concrete commitments, if any, are you leaving this summit with from the other nations that were here?

President Obama. Let me start with a general point. There was unanimity over the last 2 days that ISIL poses a significant threat to NATO members. And there was a recognition that we have to take action. I did not get any resistance or pushback to the basic notion that we have a critical role to play in rolling back this savage organization that is causing so much chaos in the region and is harming so many people and poses a long-term threat to the

safety and security of NATO members. So there's great conviction that we have to act as part of the international community to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. And that was extremely encouraging.

Beyond that, what we have already seen is significant support from a variety of member states for specific actions that we've been taking in Iraq. Keep in mind, we've taken already a hundred strikes in Iraq that have had a significant impact on degrading their capabilities and making sure that we're protecting U.S. citizens, critical infrastructure, providing the space for the Iraqi Government to form. Our hope is that the Iraqi Government is actually formed and finalized next week. That then allows us to work with them on a broader strategy.

And some of the assistance has been in the form of airlift or humanitarian assistance. Much of it has been providing additional arms to the Peshmerga and the Iraqi security forces. There's been logistical support, intelligence and surveillance and reconnaissance support. And so a variety of folks with different capabilities have already made a contribution. I'm confident that we're going to be able to build on that strong foundation and the clear commitment and have the kind of coalition that will be required for the sustained effort we need to push ISIL back.

Now, John Kerry is going to be traveling the region to have further consultations with the regional actors and the regional players. And I think it is absolutely critical that we have Arab States, and specifically Sunni-majority states, that are rejecting the kind of extremist nihilism that we're seeing out of ISIL, that say that is not what Islam is about, and are prepared to join us actively in the fight. And my expectation is, is that we will see friends and allies and partners of ours in the region prepared to take action as well, as part of a coalition.

One of our tasks, though, is also going to be to build capability. What we've learned in Iraq is, yes, ISIL has significant capabilities, and they combine terrorist tactics with traditional military tactics to significant effect, but part of the problem also is, is that we haven't seen as effective a fighting force on the part of the Iraqi security forces as we need. And we're going to have to focus on the capable units that are already there, bolster them, bolster the work that the Peshmerga has done. We can support them from the air, but ultimately, we're going to need a strong ground game, and we're also going to need the Sunni tribes in many of these areas to recognize that their future is not with the kind of fanaticism that ISIL represents so that they start taking the fight to ISIL as well. And that's going to require the sort of regional partnerships that we're talking about.

In terms of timetable, we are working deliberately. If you look at what we've done over the last several months, we've taken this in stages. The first stage is to make sure that we were encouraging Iraqi Government formation. Second stage was making sure that, building on the intelligence assessments that we had done, that we were in a position to conduct limited airstrikes to protect our personnel, critical infrastructure, and engage in humanitarian activities.

The third phase will allow us to take the fight to ISIL, broaden the effort. And our goal is to act with urgency, but also to make sure that we're doing it right: that we have the right targets; that there's support on the ground if we take an airstrike; that we have a strong political coalition, diplomatic effort that is matching it; a strong strategic communications effort so that we are discouraging people from thinking somehow that ISIL represents a State, much less a caliphate. So all those things are going to have to be combined.

And as I said, it's not going to happen overnight, but we are steadily moving in the right direction. And we are going to achieve our goal. We are going to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL, the same way that we have gone after Al Qaida and the same way that we have gone after the Al Qaida affiliate in Somalia, where we released today the fact that we had killed the leader of al-Shabaab in Somalia and have consistently worked to degrade their operations.

We have been very systematic and methodical in going after these kinds of organizations

that may threaten U.S. personnel and the homeland. And that deliberation allows us to do it right. But have no doubt, we will continue and I will continue to do what is necessary to protect the American people. And ISIL poses a real threat, and I'm encouraged by the fact that our friends and allies recognize that same threat.

Julie Davis [New York Times].

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Al Qaida Terrorist Organization/U.S. Counterterrorism Efforts/Syria

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I want to follow up on what you were saying about ISIL and ask, if you think that the objective here is to destroy and degrade them, are those the same thing in your mind? Is the goal to ultimately—Secretary Kerry said that there's no containing them, so is the goal to ultimately annihilate them? And also, you talked about the importance of expertise on the ground and building up capacity on the ground. Do you think since airstrikes are not going to do it here, if ultimately, action is needed in Syria, can you realistically expect the Free Syrian Army to do what's needed on the ground to really destroy, not just push back, ISIL?

President Obama. You can't contain an organization that is running roughshod through that much territory, causing that much havoc, displacing that many people, killing that many innocents, enslaving that many women. The goal has to be to dismantle them.

And if you look at what happened with Al Qaida in the FATA, where their primary base was, you initially push them back. You systematically degrade their capabilities. You narrow their scope of action. You slowly shrink the space, the territory that they may control. You take out their leadership. And over time, they are not able to conduct the same kinds of terrorist attacks as they once could.

As I said, I think, in my last press conference, given the nature of these organizations, are there potentially remnants of an organization that are still running around and hiding and still potentially plotting? Absolutely. And we will continue to hunt them down the same way we're doing with remnants of Al Qaida in the FATA or elements of al-Shabaab in Somalia or terrorists who operate anywhere around the world.

But what we can accomplish is to dismantle this network, this force that has claimed to control this much territory, so that they can't do us harm. And that's going to be our objective. And as I said before, I'm pleased to see that there's unanimity among our friends and allies that that is a worthy goal and they are prepared to work with us in accomplishing that goal.

With respect to the situation on the ground in Syria, we will not be placing U.S. ground troops to try to control the areas that are part of the conflict inside of Syria. I don't think that's necessary for us to accomplish our goal. We are going to have to find effective partners on the ground to push back against ISIL. And the moderate coalition there is one that we can work with. We have experience working with many of them. They have been, to some degree, outgunned and outmanned, and that's why it's important for us to work with our friends and allies to support them more effectively.

But keep in mind that when you have U.S. forces, other advanced nations going after ISIL and putting them on the defensive and putting them on the run, it's pretty remarkable what then ground forces can do, even if initially they were on the defensive against ISIL.

So that is a developing strategy that we are going to be consulting with our friends, our allies, our regional partners. But the bottom line is, we will do what is necessary in order to make sure that ISIL does not threaten the United States or our friends and partners. Okay?

One last question. Colleen. Colleen Nelson, Wall Street Journal.

Immigration Reform

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Some say that Democrats who are facing tough races in November have asked you to delay action on immigration. How have the concerns of other Democrats influenced your thinking? And do

you see any downside at this point to delaying until after the election?

President Obama. I have to tell you that this week I've been pretty busy, focused on Ukraine and focused on ISIL and focused on making sure that NATO is boosting its commitments and following through on what's necessary to meet 21st-century challenges.

Jeh Johnson and Eric Holder have begun to provide me some of their proposals and recommendations. I'll be reviewing them. And my expectation is that fairly soon, I'll be considering what the next steps are.

What I'm unequivocal about is that we need immigration reform, that my overriding preference is to see Congress act. We had bipartisan action in the Senate. The House Republicans have sat on it for over a year. That has damaged the economy, it has held America back. It is a mistake. And in the absence of congressional action, I intend to take action to make sure that we're putting more resources on the border, that we're upgrading how we process these cases, and that we find a way to encourage legal immigration and give people some path so that they can start paying taxes and pay a fine and learn English and be able to not look over their shoulder, but be legal, since they've been living here for quite some time.

So I suspect that on my flight back, this will be part of my reading, taking a look at some of the specifics that we've looked at. And I'll be making an announcement soon.

But I want to be very clear: My intention is, in the absence of action by Congress, I'm going to do what I can do within the legal constraints of my office, because it's the right thing to do for the country. All right?

Thank you very much, people of Wales. I had a wonderful time.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:50 p.m. at the Celtic Manor Resort. In his remarks, the President referred to Afghan Presidential candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai; Ahmed Abdi Godane, leader of the al-Shabaab terrorist organization, who was killed by a U.S. airstrike in southern Somalia on September 1; and Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson. He also referred to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Armed Forces Personnel to Iraq
September 5, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As I previously reported on June 16 and June 30, 2014, U.S. Armed Forces personnel have deployed to Iraq to provide security and support for U.S. personnel and facilities. On September 2, 2014, I authorized up to approximately 350 additional U.S. Armed Forces personnel to deploy to Iraq to provide support and security for U.S. personnel and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. The first of these additional personnel arrived in Iraq on September 4, 2014. This force is deploying for the purpose of protecting U.S. citizens and property, if necessary, and is equipped for combat. This force will remain in Iraq until the security situation becomes such that it is no longer needed.

This action is being undertaken in coordination with the Government of Iraq and has been directed consistent with my responsibility to protect U.S. citizens both at home and abroad, and in furtherance of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Commencement of United States Military Operations in Iraq
September 8, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As I reported on August 8 and 17 and on September 1, 2014, U.S. Armed Forces have conducted targeted airstrikes in Iraq for the limited purposes of stopping the advance on Erbil by the terrorist group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), supporting civilians trapped on Mount Sinjar, supporting operations by Iraqi forces to recapture the Mosul Dam, and supporting an operation to deliver humanitarian assistance to civilians in the town of Amirli, Iraq.

On September 6, 2014, pursuant to my authorization, U.S. Armed Forces commenced targeted airstrikes in the vicinity of the Haditha Dam in support of Iraqi forces in their efforts to retain control of and defend this critical infrastructure site from ISIL. These additional military operations will be limited in their scope and duration as necessary to address this threat and prevent endangerment of U.S. personnel and facilities and large numbers of Iraqi civilians.

I have directed these actions, which are in the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. These actions are being undertaken in coordination with and at the request of the Iraqi government.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Address to the Nation on United States Strategy To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization
September 10, 2014

My fellow Americans, tonight I want to speak to you about what the United States will do with our friends and allies to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL.

As Commander in Chief, my highest priority is the security of the American people. Over the last several years, we have consistently taken the fight to terrorists who threaten our country. We took out Usama bin Laden and much of Al Qaida's leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We've targeted Al Qaida's affiliate in Yemen and recently eliminated the top commander of its affiliate in Somalia. We've done so while bringing more than 140,000 American troops home from Iraq and drawing down our forces in Afghanistan, where our combat mission will end later this year. Thanks to our military and counterterrorism professionals, America is safer.

Still, we continue to face a terrorist threat. We can't erase every trace of evil from the world, and small groups of killers have the capacity to do great harm. That was the case before 9/11, and that remains true today. And that's why we must remain vigilant as threats

emerge. At this moment, the greatest threats come from the Middle East and North Africa, where radical groups exploit grievances for their own gain. And one of those groups is ISIL, which calls itself the "Islamic State."

Now, let's make two things clear: ISIL is not Islamic. No religion condones the killing of innocents. And the vast majority of ISIL's victims have been Muslim. And ISIL is certainly not a state. It was formerly Al Qaida's affiliate in Iraq and has taken advantage of sectarian strife and Syria's civil war to gain territory on both sides of the Iraq-Syrian border. It is recognized by no government, nor by the people it subjugates. ISIL is a terrorist organization, pure and simple. And it has no vision other than the slaughter of all who stand in its way.

In a region that has known so much bloodshed, these terrorists are unique in their brutality. They execute captured prisoners. They kill children. They enslave, rape, and force women into marriage. They threatened a religious minority with genocide. And in acts of barbarism, they took the lives of two American journalists, Jim Foley and Steven Sotloff.

So ISIL poses a threat to the people of Iraq and Syria and the broader Middle East, including American citizens, personnel, and facilities. If left unchecked, these terrorists could pose a growing threat beyond that region, including to the United States. While we have not yet detected specific plotting against our homeland, ISIL leaders have threatened America and our allies. Our intelligence community believes that thousands of foreigners, including Europeans and some Americans, have joined them in Syria and Iraq. Trained and battle-hardened, these fighters could try to return to their home countries and carry out deadly attacks.

I know many Americans are concerned about these threats. Tonight I want you to know that the United States of America is meeting them with strength and resolve. Last month, I ordered our military to take targeted action against ISIL to stop its advances. Since then, we've conducted more than 150 successful airstrikes in Iraq. These strikes have protected American personnel and facilities, killed ISIL fighters, destroyed weapons, and given space for Iraqi and Kurdish forces to reclaim key territory. These strikes have also helped save the lives of thousands of innocent men, women, and children.

But this is not our fight alone. American power can make a decisive difference, but we cannot do for Iraqis what they must do for themselves, nor can we take the place of Arab partners in securing their region. And that's why I've insisted that additional U.S. action depended upon Iraqis forming an inclusive Government, which they have now done in recent days. So tonight, with a new Iraqi Government in place, and following consultations with allies abroad and Congress at home, I can announce that America will lead a broad coalition to roll back this terrorist threat.

Our objective is clear: We will degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy.

First, we will conduct a systematic campaign of airstrikes against these terrorists. Working with the Iraqi Government, we will expand our efforts beyond protecting our own people and humanitarian missions so that we're hitting ISIL targets as Iraqi forces go on offense. Moreover, I have made it clear that we will hunt down terrorists who threaten our country, wherever they are. That means I will not hesitate to take action against ISIL in Syria, as well as Iraq. This is a core principle of my Presidency: If you threaten America, you will find no safe haven.

Second, we will increase our support to forces fighting these terrorists on the ground. In June, I deployed several hundred American servicemembers to Iraq to assess how we can best support Iraqi security forces. Now that those teams have completed their work and Iraq has formed a Government, we will send an additional 475 servicemembers to Iraq. As I have said before, these American forces will not have a combat mission. We will not get dragged into another ground war in Iraq. But they are needed to support Iraqi and Kurdish forces with training, intelligence, and equipment. We'll also support Iraq's efforts to stand up national guard units to help Sunni

communities secure their own freedom from ISIL's control.

Across the border, in Syria, we have ramped up our military assistance to the Syrian opposition. Tonight I call on Congress again to give us additional authorities and resources to train and equip these fighters. In the fight against ISIL, we cannot rely on an Asad regime that terrorizes its own people, a regime that will never regain the legitimacy it has lost. Instead, we must strengthen the opposition as the best counterweight to extremists like ISIL, while pursuing the political solution necessary to solve Syria's crisis once and for all.

Third, we will continue to draw on our substantial counterterrorism capabilities to prevent ISIL attacks. Working with our partners, we will redouble our efforts to cut off its funding, improve our intelligence, strengthen our defenses, counter its warped ideology, and stem the flow of foreign fighters into and out of the Middle East. And in 2 weeks, I will chair a meeting of the U.N. Security Council to further mobilize the international community around this effort.

Fourth, we will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians who have been displaced by this terrorist organization. This includes Sunni and Shia Muslims who are at grave risk, as well as tens of thousands of Christians and other religious minorities. We cannot allow these communities to be driven from their ancient homelands.

So this is our strategy. And in each of these four parts of our strategy, America will be joined by a broad coalition of partners. Already, allies are flying planes with us over Iraq, sending arms and assistance to Iraqi security forces and the Syrian opposition, sharing intelligence, and providing billions of dollars in humanitarian aid. Secretary Kerry was in Iraq today meeting with the new Government and supporting their efforts to promote unity. And in the coming days, he will travel across the Middle East and Europe to enlist more partners in this fight, especially Arab nations who can help mobilize Sunni communities in Iraq and Syria to drive these terrorists from their lands. This is American leadership at its best: We stand with people who fight for their own freedom, and we rally other nations on behalf of our common security and common humanity.

My administration has also secured bipartisan support for this approach here at home. I have the authority to address the threat from ISIL, but I believe we are strongest as a nation when the President and Congress work together. So I welcome congressional support for this effort in order to show the world that Americans are united in confronting this danger.

Now, it will take time to eradicate a cancer like ISIL. And any time we take military action, there are risks involved, especially to the service men and women who carry out these missions. But I want the American people to understand how this effort will be different from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It will not involve American combat troops fighting on foreign soil. This counterterrorism campaign will be waged through a steady, relentless effort to take out ISIL wherever they exist, using our air power and our support for partners' forces on the ground. This strategy of taking out terrorists who threaten us while supporting partners on the front lines is one that we have successfully pursued in Yemen and Somalia for years. And it is consistent with the approach I outlined earlier this year: to use force against anyone who threatens America's core interests, but to mobilize partners wherever possible to address broader challenges to international order.

My fellow Americans, we live in a time of great change. Tomorrow marks 13 years since our country was attacked. Next week marks 6 years since our economy suffered its worst setback since the Great Depression. Yet, despite these shocks, through the pain we've felt and the grueling work required to bounce back, America is better positioned today to seize the future than any other nation on Earth.

Our technology companies and universities are unmatched. Our manufacturing and auto industries are thriving. Energy independence is closer than it's been in decades. For all the work that remains, our businesses are in the longest uninterrupted stretch of job creation in our history. Despite all the divisions and dis-

cord within our democracy, I see the grit and determination and common goodness of the American people every single day, and that makes me more confident than ever about our country's future.

Abroad, American leadership is the one constant in an uncertain world. It is America that has the capacity and the will to mobilize the world against terrorists. It is America that has rallied the world against Russian aggression and in support of the Ukrainian people's right to determine their own destiny. It is America—our scientists, our doctors, our know-how—that can help contain and cure the outbreak of Ebola. It is America that helped remove and destroy Syria's declared chemical weapons so that they can't pose a threat to the Syrian people or the world again. And it is America that is helping Muslim communities around the world not just in the fight against terrorism, but in the fight for opportunity and tolerance and a more hopeful future.

America, our endless blessings bestow an enduring burden. But as Americans, we welcome our responsibility to lead. From Europe to Asia, from the far reaches of Africa to war-torn capitals of the Middle East, we stand for freedom, for justice, for dignity. These are values that have guided our Nation since its founding.

Tonight I ask for your support in carrying that leadership forward. I do so as a Commander in Chief who could not be prouder of our men and women in uniform: pilots who bravely fly in the face of danger above the Middle East and servicemembers who support our partners on the ground.

When we helped to prevent the massacre of civilians trapped on a distant mountain, here's what one of them said: "We owe our American friends our lives. Our children will always remember that there was someone who felt our struggle and made a long journey to protect innocent people."

That is the difference we make in the world. And our own safety, our own security, depends upon our willingness to do what it takes to defend this Nation and uphold the values that we stand for, timeless ideals that will endure long after those who offer only hate and destruction have been vanquished from the Earth.

May God bless our troops, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:01 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ahmed Abdi Godane, leader of the al-Shabaab terrorist organization, who was killed by a U.S. airstrike in southern Somalia on September 1; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

Remarks at a Wreath-Laying Ceremony at the Pentagon Memorial in Arlington, Virginia
September 11, 2014

Good morning. Scripture tells us, "We count as blessed those who have persevered."

Secretary Hagel, General Dempsey, members of our Armed Forces, and most of all, the survivors of that September day and the families of those we lost: Michelle and I are humbled to be with you once again.

It has now been 13 years. Thirteen years since the peace of an American morning was broken. Thirteen years since nearly 3,000 beautiful lives were taken from us, including 125 men and women serving here at the Pentagon. Thirteen years of moments they would have shared with us. Thirteen years of memories they would have made.

Here, once more, we pray for the souls of those we remember, for you, their families, who love them forever, and for a nation that has been inspired by your example: your determination to carry on, your resolve to live lives worthy of their memories.

As Americans, we draw strength from you. For your love is the ultimate rebuke to the hatred of those who attacked us that bright, blue morning. They sought to do more than bring down buildings or murder our people. They

sought to break our spirit and to prove to the world that their power to destroy was greater than our power to persevere and to build. But you, and America, proved them wrong.

America endures in the strength of your families who, through your anguish, kept living. You have kept alive a love that no act of terror can ever extinguish. You, their sons and daughters, are growing into extraordinary young men and women they knew you could be. By your shining example, your families have turned this day into something that those who attacked us could never abide, and that is a tribute of hope over fear and love over hate.

America endures in the tenacity of our survivors. After grievous wounds, you learned to walk again and stand again. After terrible burns, you smiled once more. For you, for our Nation, these have been difficult years. But by your presence here today, in the lives of service that you have led, you embody the truth that no matter what comes our way, America will always come out stronger.

America endures in the dedication of those who keep us safe. The firefighter, the officer, the EMT who carries the memory of a fallen partner as they report to work each and every day, prepared to make the same sacrifice for us all. Because of these men and women, Americans now work in a gleaming Freedom Tower. We visit our great cities, we fill our stadiums and cheer for our teams. We carry on, because, as Americans, we do not give in to fear—ever.

America endures in the courage of the men and women who serve under our flag. Over more than a decade of war, this 9/11 generation has answered our country's call, and 3 months from now, our combat mission in Afghanistan will come to an end. Today we honor all who have made the ultimate sacrifice these 13 years, more than 6,800 American patriots. And we give thanks to those who serve in harm's way to keep our country safe and meet the threats of our time.

America endures in that perennial optimism that defines us as a people. Beginning tomorrow, there will be teenagers—young adults—who were born after 9/11. It's remarkable. And while these young Americans did not know the horrors of that day, their lives have been shaped by all the days since, a time that has brought us pain, but also taught us endurance and strength; a time of rebuilding, of resilience, and of renewal. What gives us hope—what gives me hope—is that it is these young Americans who will shape all the days to come.

Thirteen years after small and hateful minds conspired to break us, America stands tall and America stands proud. And guided by the values that sustain us, we will only grow stronger. Generations from now, Americans will still fill our parks, our stadiums, our cities. Generations from now, Americans will still build towers that reach toward the heavens, still serve in Embassies that stand for freedom around the world, still wear the uniform and give meaning to those words written two centuries ago: land of the free, home of the brave. Generations from now, no matter the trial, no matter the challenge, America will always be America.

"We count as blessed those who have persevered."

May God bless your families, who continue to inspire us all. May God bless our Armed Forces and all who serve to keep us safe. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m.

Statement on International Sanctions Against Russia
September 11, 2014

Today we join the European Union in announcing that we will intensify our coordinated sanctions on Russia in response to its illegal actions in Ukraine. I have said from the very beginning of this crisis that we want to see a negotiated political solution that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Together with G–7 and European partners and our other allies, we have made clear that we are prepared to impose mounting costs on

Russia. We are implementing these new measures in light of Russia's actions to further destabilize Ukraine over the last month, including through the presence of heavily armed Russian forces in eastern Ukraine. We are watching closely developments since the announcement of the cease-fire and agreement in Minsk, but we have yet to see conclusive evidence that Russia has ceased its efforts to destabilize Ukraine.

We will deepen and broaden sanctions in Russia's financial, energy, and defense sectors. These measures will increase Russia's political isolation as well as the economic costs to Russia, especially in areas of importance to President Putin and those close to him. My administration will outline the specifics of these new sanctions tomorrow.

The international community continues to seek a genuine negotiated solution to the crisis in Ukraine. I encourage President Putin to work with Ukraine and other international partners, within the context of the Minsk agreement and without setting unreasonable conditions, to reach a lasting resolution to the conflict. As I said last week, if Russia fully implements its commitments, these sanctions can be rolled back. If, instead, Russia continues its aggressive actions and violations of international law, the costs will continue to rise.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Armed Forces Personnel to the Central African Republic
September 11, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On September 10, 2014, approximately 20 U.S. Armed Forces personnel deployed to the Central African Republic to support the resumption of the activities of the U.S. Embassy in Bangui. This force was deployed along with U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Security personnel for the purpose of protecting U.S. Embassy personnel and property. This force is expected to remain in the Central African Republic until it is replaced by an augmented U.S. Marine Security Guard Detachment and additional U.S. Department of State civilian security personnel as the security situation allows.

This action has been directed consistent with my responsibility to protect U.S. citizens both at home and abroad, and in furtherance of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks on the 20th Anniversary of AmeriCorps
September 12, 2014

Thank you so much. Thank you. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House. Give Ivan a big round of applause for the introduction. Dayna, thank you for sharing your story. And I want to thank all of you for joining President Clinton and me in celebrating this 20th anniversary of AmeriCorps.

I want to thank some strong supporters of national service who are here today. We've got Treasury Secretary Jack Lew, who as a young aide to President Clinton—I mean, they both

still look good—[*laughter*]—but 20 years ago, helped to write the legislation creating AmeriCorps' 20 years—20-year legacy. So thank you, Jack, for the great job.

You already heard from Wendy Spencer, who is—she never runs out of energy and is reflective of the spirit of AmeriCorps—the CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. Great job, Wendy.

My dear friend, former Senator Harris Wofford, who not only used to run CNCS, but also helped to create VISTA and the Peace Corps. I don't know anybody who's got a greater legacy of creating community and helping people to channel their civic virtues than Harris Wofford. We're so proud of him.

Carrie Hessler-Radelet, the new Director of the Peace Corps. Where's Carrie? There she is right there. We've got Congressman John Lewis, who didn't have an AmeriCorps program; just went out and got a whole lot done, which is why I'm standing here. David Price. Senator Martin Heinrich, the first AmeriCorps alum to be elected to the Senate. And everybody who's here who played a part in creating and sustaining AmeriCorps, both in the Clinton administration and the Bush administration and in Congress, and all the service leaders who mobilized and rallied over the years to keep AmeriCorps going. I thank all of you for living a life of active and energetic and engaged citizenship, because it has made America stronger. You have made America stronger because of what you've done.

Now, as President Clinton mentioned, not everybody who played an enormous role in this could be here today. Two people in particular who aren't, but who are in our hearts: Eli Segal, who did so much to get the Corporation for National and Community Service up and running two decades ago; and a man whose extraordinary achievements live on because he never stopped asking what he could do for his country, our dear friend Senator Ted Kennedy. His name is on the law that I signed 5 years ago expanding AmeriCorps—it was one of the last big public events that Teddy did—a law that's going to give a new generation of Americans more opportunities to give back to their communities and their country. And Teddy's wife Vicki as well as Eli's wife Phyllis are here today as well. We thank you so much for everything that you've done and for your support.

Now, as Wendy mentioned, all of you who are here are part of a national event. Since yesterday, 9/11 Day of Service, hundreds of thousands of Americans have taken part in service projects in all 50 States. Michelle and I spent a few hours helping out a school here in DC. Joe Biden volunteered down the street at George Washington University. Today thousands of Americans are taking the pledge as new AmeriCorps members. President George H.W. Bush is swearing in volunteers in Maine. President George W. Bush and Laura Bush have filmed a video that's being shown across the country.

So it echoes back to that day in 1994, when President Clinton swore in that first class of AmeriCorps members right here at the White House. And some of the people who are here were in that class, and if you were, you might remember him saying that you were starting a journey that would change your lives forever, that AmeriCorps would change the life of the Nation, that it would give new life to the values that bind us together as Americans.

And that was a bold claim. But Bill Clinton is an optimist. [*Laughter*] And he knew from his own life, as I know from mine, what service can do: the sense of common purpose that it cultivates; the opportunity to join our fellow Americans to work together for something other than just ourselves, for something bigger, for the common good. And so he had high hopes on that bright September day. And he was not the only one.

William Consuegra took the AmeriCorps pledge that day. Then he went to work for Youth Harvest in Texas, helping high school students improve their literacy skills. Twenty years later, he's still a public servant, helping communities in New Mexico with community development.

Matthew Little took the pledge that day. He went to work for City Year in Boston. There, he says, he discovered a new source of inspiration: "Students who came to me with F's and

left my homework club with A's." And he's been an educator ever since.

Sondra Samuels took that pledge that day. She headed to Philadelphia to join the Weed and Seed Initiative, helping communities reduce violent crime and gang activity. And she says that AmeriCorps taught her "that I can look at my country and [I can] actually make it different, not just wish it were different."

In Chicago, a bright, eager young woman shared in the hope of that day too. She had recently left her job at a law firm, became the founding executive director of Public Allies in Chicago, a nonprofit that trains young people for careers in public service. And soon after, Public Allies received one of the very first grants that AmeriCorps ever awarded. And that young woman happens to live with me. [*Laughter*] Her name is Michelle Obama. So the Obama household was on board with AmeriCorps from the start.

And for those of you who know my story starting off as a community organizer, I would not be standing here if it were not for service to others and the purpose that service gave my own life. Now, I moved to Chicago to become a community organizer in part—in parts of that town where steel plants had closed down and hope had dried up. And I wasn't sure what I was doing. I wasn't sure that I'd be successful. I was working with a group of churches out there, and we didn't have a lot of funding. And I think my starting salary was $13,000 a year and gas expenses.

But what I found was that with patience and dedicated effort, I could make a difference. It wasn't always 100 percent of what I wanted; sometimes, it was just 20 percent, sometimes, it was just 50 percent. But it turned out that you could nudge history forward. You could shape it. You could see the lives of people that you cared about improving because of this blood and sweat and tears you were putting into it.

And then I found a community for myself, and I began to understand what citizenship meant: not just some abstraction, not just words on a page, not just rights and privileges, but duties and responsibilities. And it gave me a sense of direction about how I wanted to live my life.

So, as it turned out, the idea of making a difference in other people's lives made a difference in mine. It made me whole. It gave me center. It gave me a compass. And that, when I look out on all these young people, Bill, is what's going to happen to them. Most of them are probably already a lot more sophisticated than I was at that time. [*Laughter*] And probably more gifted and more talented. But that's why when I look out, I can't describe how inspired I am, because in each of you I see unfurling all the incredible, wonderful things that you're going to be doing in your lives.

Twenty years after President Clinton signed and swore in that first AmeriCorps class, more than 900,000 Americans have learned the same lesson that I learned by serving through AmeriCorps. And they come from all walks of life: small towns, big cities, all backgrounds, all age groups. They've done everything from deliver emergency relief in the aftermath of disasters to staffing health clinics to—in underserved communities, to helping veterans find jobs. They've touched millions of lives. They've helped America become stronger and more resilient and more united.

So, Bill, you were right. AmeriCorps has changed the life of our Nation. And now it's up to us to make sure it continues. Because we're not just here to celebrate what's already been achieved, we're here to rededicate ourselves to the work that lies ahead. And the world—we're here to get things done. [*Applause*] We are here to get things done.

My administration has been determined to build on the foundation that President Bush and both—President Clinton and both Presidents Bush laid. We are determined to help AmeriCorps succeed. We've seen the outcomes that AmeriCorps members produce: improved literacy in the schools where they work. So, if we're smart, Congress will fund this calling that's meant so much to so many and keep AmeriCorps strong.

And we'll keep doing our part. That's why I created a Task Force on national service last year: to find new ways to expand and improve

national service. We've tested innovations. We're creating new models of partnership. We've reached out to the public—to the private sector. So AmeriCorps is as effective today as it's ever been.

We've created new AmeriCorps programs to address specific needs. For example, FEMA Corps trains and deploys national servicemembers to help communities recover from disasters like hurricanes and tornadoes. School Turnaround AmeriCorps sends talented individuals into underachieving schools. The new Justice AmeriCorps will pair AmeriCorps members who are lawyers and paralegals with unaccompanied immigrant children to get them legal help. STEM AmeriCorps is mobilizing scientists and engineers to inspire young people to discover and tinker and innovate and make things.

And we've brought businesses and nonprofits on board. So we've seen again and again how national service helps people—young people gain valuable skills and training, and employers have noticed. So we want to do more to help talented national service members find good jobs after they wrap up their service. And that's the idea behind an initiative we're announcing today called Employers of National Service. If you are an employer—[*applause*]—if you're an employer who wants to hire talented, dedicated, patriotic, skilled, tireless, energetic workers, look to AmeriCorps, look to the Peace Corps.

And organizations like the Disney Company and American Red Cross and City of Nashville, United Way, others are already signing up. They know what we know: Citizens who perform national service are special. You want them on your team.

As of a few minutes ago, that includes our newest members, AmeriCorps class of 2014. So you've got Catherine Stodola who just took the pledge. She's helping homeless veterans find housing through Habitat for Humanity here in Washington. You've got Jay Savoy who took the pledge. And through City Year, she's going to be—[*applause*]—she's leading a team of tutors for kids like herself in her old neighborhood in Southeast DC. Ivan, who you just heard from, took the pledge and is mentoring young people through Public Allies in Maryland.

Seventy-five thousand members of this year's AmeriCorps class will spread out across the country, and they are doing their part to help make America safer and healthier and more fair and more just. Because like all those who serve their country through AmeriCorps, they don't just believe in, but live out a fundamental truth, and that is that people who love their country can change it.

That is the genius of America. That is the promise of AmeriCorps. It's one of the reasons I am so committed to this program and why I'm so hopeful about the future. We are proud of you. That goes for all the AmeriCorps members over the years. And I'll always be proud to serve a country where there are such striving, dreaming citizens like all of you. Congratulations.

God bless you, and God bless America. Thank you, President Clinton.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:48 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ivan Marchena, Public Allies volunteer, AmeriCorps, who introduced the President; AmeriCorps alumna Dayna Long, pediatrician, Children's Hospital Oakland in Oakland, CA, who introduced former President William J. Clinton; and Phyllis Nichamoff Segal, wife of the late Eli Segal, former Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Baltimore, Maryland
September 12, 2014

Thank you. Everybody, have a seat. Well, to Howard and the whole family, thank you so much for opening your gorgeous home. It is actually the fact that Howard has been a great

friend dating back to when a lot of folks still couldn't pronounce my name. [*Laughter*] And those are the friends that you always remember and the people you really count on are folks who were there early for you and believed in your vision. And so Howard and his whole family have been wonderful, and I'm very, very grateful.

A couple other people to acknowledge, although Howard has already mentioned them. You have two of the best Senators in the country in Barbara Mikulski and Senator Cardin. You've got some of the best Members of Congress in the country: Elijah Cummings, Dutch Ruppersberger, John Sarbanes. You've got an outstanding mayor in Baltimore in Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. And although he is not from around these parts, he is just a wonderful person who has a pretty thankless job and that is making sure that Democrats retain control of the Senate, and he is doing outstanding work and is just a model public servant: Michael Bennet from Colorado.

So I'm not going to speak long at the top. I want to spend most of the time just answering questions. I'm among friends here. So many of you have heard me speak and been supporters, and we've had a lot of interactions, so this is really just a great chance for me to have a good conversation with you.

As Howard indicated, we live in deeply troubled times internationally. Challenging times. I made a speech this week discussing what is the most prominent threat that we face in the Middle East when it comes to terrorism, and that is the organization ISIL, that has not only taken over large swaths of Iraq and Syria, but displayed the kind of brutality that even by the standards of terrorists is extraordinary. And I am very confident that with an Iraqi Government in place that is committed to the kind of inclusive Government that is needed there and sadly has not been there for some time, and the kind of coalition that we're putting together internationally, and most importantly, the incredible courage and dedication and skills of our men and women in uniform, we're going to be able to push them back and ultimately destroy them.

But it's a sobering time, because any time as Commander in Chief that I order our men and women in uniform into harm's way, there are risks involved. And so I'm grateful to them. What gives me confidence is that we're on the right side of history here. And what also is a silver lining in the terrible mayhem that ISIL has wrought throughout the region is that it has focused attention, I think, for the first time in a long time in the Muslim world, a great clarity about the need to completely distance from and ultimately snuff out this particular brand of Islamic extremism that really has no place in the 21st century.

And so we're going to be able to build the kind of coalition that allows us to lead, but also isn't entirely dependent on what we do. And that's, I think, a measure of how we've got to approach these problems, because they're not going to go away immediately. We will defeat ISIL, but there are always going to be these threats of terrorism, and we're going to have to make sure that we are creating the structure and the partnerships and the commitment that allows us over the long haul to win this fight.

But obviously, that's not the only challenge that we have. On Ukraine, we've seen a Russian Government that has rejected international norms, violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a neighbor. And that raises important challenges for us as leaders of NATO. I just came back from Wales, where, once again, because of American leadership, we've seen all 28 NATO countries and partner countries mobilize themselves to isolate Russia and to support Ukrainian bids for independence and freedom.

And if it were not for us, I think it's fair to say that the situation would be much worse. But it's something that we are going to have to not just pay attention to, but continue to organize, not so much because Ukraine itself is a vital national security threat to us—we do very little trade with Ukraine, and geopolitically, it doesn't—what happens in Ukraine doesn't pose a direct threat to us—but because we are expected to uphold basic international rules and norms. And those rules and norms are what not only allows us to prosper, but has

allowed an unprecedented number of people to rise out of poverty and wealth to spread to vast corners of the world and the Internet to connect the world together.

It's because we, over the course of the entire post–World War II era, created these structures. And we're obliged to continue to tend to them and protect them and defend them. And that's what I intend to do.

But in addition to these big international challenges, I think it's important for us to remember that for most Americans, day to day, what they're concerned about is, can I send my kid to college? Day to day, what they're thinking about is, boy, I'm working really, really hard, and I haven't had a raise or an increase in my wages in a very long time; I'm a woman and I know that I'm doing as good of a job as the person next to me, and somehow, I don't think I'm being treated quite the same when it comes to compensation or promotions.

Those are the issues that people experience viscerally in their day-to-day lives. And if you want to know why we're here today, it's because having a strong Democratic Senate allows us to continue to pursue a vision of an inclusive, progressive, economic agenda that is going to continue to give more and more people the chance to pursue the American Dream in the way that I have and Howard has and so many people around this room have.

We have made extraordinary strides over the last 5 years. And sometimes, I think we take for granted the fact that we've had the longest uninterrupted stretch of job growth in American history; that we have cut the deficit by more than half; that our energy production is higher than we've seen in decades and our clean energy is being produced at a rate we've never seen before; that we've got more kids going to college now, the high school graduation rate has increased during this period of time. And despite a few bumps along the way, we've got millions of people who have health care who didn't have it before, and by the way, the costs of health care have been growing at a slower rate than any time in the last 50 years.

So we've made unbelievable progress: an auto industry that rose up from the ashes and now is producing better cars than ever, a financial system that stabilized more manufacturing any time in the last 20 years. And around the world, when you ask people, where is the number-one place to invest, they don't say China anymore, which is what they had been saying recently. They now say, once again, the United States of America.

So we've got all the cards. We have the most powerful military on Earth by a massive margin. We have the best workers. We've got the most innovative companies. We are at the cutting edge of every piece of technology. We are the envy of the world, but in order to actually fully realize that potential, we've got to have a government that works. And the reason you're here today is you recognize that and you're willing to make sacrifices for it.

And for that, we are extraordinarily grateful. And we want to make sure that Barbara Mikulski and Ben Cardin and Michael Bennet—all the folks in Senate—and then all those folks in the House, that they're able to pursue a vision that assures our children and our grandchildren are going to have just the same amazing opportunities and the same security and the same prosperity as we've enjoyed in our lives.

So thank you for making that sacrifice. Appreciate it very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:15 p.m. at the residence of Howard E. Friedman. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Weekly Address
September 13, 2014

As Commander in Chief, my highest priority is the security of the American people. And I've made it clear that those who threaten the United States will find no safe haven. Thanks to our military and counterterrorism professionals, we took out Usama bin Laden, much of

Al Qaida's leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and leaders of Al Qaida affiliates in Yemen and Somalia. We've prevented terrorist attacks, saved American lives, and made our homeland more secure.

Today, the terrorist threat is more diffuse, from Al Qaida affiliates and other extremists, like ISIL in Syria and Iraq. As I said this week, our intelligence community has not yet detected specific ISIL plots against our homeland. But its leaders have repeatedly threatened the United States. And if left unchecked, these terrorists could pose a growing threat beyond the Middle East, including to the United States. So we're staying vigilant. And we're moving ahead with our strategy to degrade and ultimately destroy this terrorist organization.

To meet a threat like this, we have to be smart. We have to use our power wisely. And we have to avoid the mistakes of the past. American military power is unmatched, but this can't be America's fight alone. And the best way to defeat a group like ISIL isn't by sending a large number of American combat forces to wage a ground war in the heart of the Middle East. That wouldn't serve our interests. In fact, it would only risk fueling extremism even more.

What's needed now is a targeted, relentless counterterrorism campaign against ISIL that combines American air power, contributions from allies and partners, and more support to forces that are fighting these terrorists on the ground. And that's exactly what we're doing.

We're moving ahead with our campaign of airstrikes against these terrorists, and we're prepared to take action against ISIL in Syria as well. The additional American forces I've ordered to Iraq will help Iraqi and Kurdish forces with the training, intelligence, and equipment they need to take the fight to these terrorists on the ground. We're working with Congress to expand our efforts to train and equip the Syrian opposition. We'll continue to strengthen our defenses here at home. And we'll keep providing the humanitarian relief to help Iraqi civilians who have been driven from their homes and who remain in extreme danger.

Because we're leading the right way, more nations are joining our coalition. This week, Arab nations agreed to strengthen their support for the new Iraqi Government and to do their part in the fight against ISIL, including aspects of the military campaign. Saudi Arabia will join the effort to help train and equip moderate Syrian opposition forces. And retired Marine General John Allen, who during the Iraq war worked with Sunnis in Iraq as they fought to reclaim their communities from terrorists, will serve as our Special Envoy to help build and coordinate our growing coalition.

Today, every American can be proud of our men and women in uniform who are serving in this effort. When our airstrikes helped break the siege of the Iraq town of Amerli, one Kurdish fighter on the ground said, "It would have been absolutely impossible without the American planes." One resident of that city said, "Thank you, America."

Today, we're showing the world the best of American leadership. We will protect our people. We will stand with partners who defend their countries and rally other nations to meet a common threat. And here at home, 13 years after our country was attacked, we continue to stand tall and proud, because we are Americans and we don't give in to fear. We carry on. And we will never waver in the defense of the country that we love.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:45 p.m. on September 12 in the State Dining Room at the White House for broadcast on September 13. In the address, the President referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; and Gen. John R. Allen, USMC (Ret.), Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition To Counter ISIL. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 12, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 13.

Statement on the Death of David C. Haines
September 13, 2014

The United States strongly condemns the barbaric murder of U.K. citizen David Haines by the terrorist group ISIL. Our hearts go out to the family of Mr. Haines and to the people of the United Kingdom. The United States stands shoulder to shoulder tonight with our close friend and ally in grief and resolve. We will work with the United Kingdom and a broad coalition of nations from the region and around the world to bring the perpetrators of this outrageous act to justice and to degrade and destroy this threat to the people of our countries, the region, and the world.

NOTE: The statement referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks on Presenting the Medal of Honor to Command Sergeant Major Bennie G. Adkins and Posthumously to Specialist 4 Donald P. Sloat
September 15, 2014

Please be seated. Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House. More than four decades ago, in early 1970, an American squad in Vietnam set out on patrol. They marched down a trail, past a rice paddy. Shots rang out and splintered the bamboo above their heads. The lead soldier tripped a wire: a booby trap. A grenade rolled toward the feet of a 20-year-old machine gunner. The pin was pulled, and that grenade would explode at any moment.

A few years earlier, on the other side of the country, deep in the jungle, a small group of Americans were crouched on top of a small hill. And it was dark, and they were exhausted; the enemy had been pursuing them for days. And now they were surrounded, and the enemy was closing in on all sides.

Two discrete moments, but today we honor two American soldiers for gallantry above and beyond the call of duty at each of those moments: Specialist Donald Sloat, who stood above that grenade, and Command Sergeant Major Bennie Adkins, who fought through a ferocious battle and found himself on that jungle hill.

Nearly half a century after their acts of valor, a grateful nation bestows upon these men the highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor.

Now, normally, this medal must be awarded within a few years of the action. But sometimes, even the most extraordinary stories can get lost in the fog of war or the passage of time. Yet when new evidence comes to light, certain actions can be reconsidered for this honor, and it is entirely right and proper that we have done so. And that is why we are here today.

So, before I go any further, I want to thank everyone present here today whose research and testimonies and persistence over so many years finally resulted in these two men deserving the recognition they so richly deserve. I especially want to welcome members of the Medal of Honor Society, as well as two American families whose love and pride has never wavered.

Don Sloat grew up in the heart of Oklahoma in a town called Coweta. And he grew big, to over 6′4″. He loved football and played for a year at a junior college. And then, he decided to join the Army. But when he went to enlist, he didn't pass his physical because of high blood pressure. So he tried again and again and again. In all, he took the physical maybe seven times until he passed, because Don Sloat was determined to serve his country.

In Vietnam, Don became known as one of the most liked and reliable guys in his company. Twice in his first months, his patrol was ambushed; both times, Don responded with punishing fire from his machine gun, leaving himself completely vulnerable to the enemy. And both times, he was recognized for his

bravery. Or as Don put it in a letter home, "I guess they think [that] I'm really gung-ho or something." [*Laughter*]

And then one morning, Don and his squad set out on patrol, past that rice paddy, down that trail, when those shots rang out. When the lead soldier's foot tripped that wire and set off the booby trap, the grenade rolled right to Don's feet. And at that moment, he could have run. At that moment, he could have ducked for cover. But Don did something truly extraordinary. He reached down, and he picked that grenade up. And he turned to throw it, but there were Americans in front of him and behind him, inside the kill zone. So Don held on to that grenade, and he pulled it close to his body. And he bent over it. And then, as one of the men said, "all of a sudden there was a boom."

The blast threw the lead soldier up against a boulder. Men were riddled with shrapnel. Four were medevaced out, but everyone else survived. Don had absorbed the brunt of the explosion with his body. He saved the lives of those next to him. And today, we're joined by two men who were with him on that patrol: Sergeant William Hacker and Specialist Michael Mulheim.

For decades, Don's family only knew that he was killed in action. They'd heard that he had stepped on a landmine. All those years, this Gold Star family honored the memory of their son and brother, whose name is etched forever on that granite wall not far from here. Late in her life, Don's mother, Evelyn, finally learned the full story of her son's sacrifice. And she made it her mission to have Don's actions properly recognized.

Now, sadly, nearly 3 years ago, Evelyn passed away. But she always believed—she knew—that this day would come. She even bought a special dress to wear to this ceremony. We are honored that Don—and his mom—are represented here today by Don's brother and sisters and their families. On behalf of this American family, I'd ask Don's brother, Dr. Bill Sloat, to come forward for the reading of the citation and accept the gratitude of our Nation.

[*At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Jillian C. Malzone, USCG, Coast Guard Aide to the President, read the citation. The President then presented the medal, assisted by Lt. Col. Michael P. Wagner, USA, Army Aide to the President.*]

At this point, I'd like to ask Bennie Adkins to come join me on stage.

Now, let me just say, the first thing you need to know is, when Bennie and I met in the Oval Office, he asked if he could sign back up. [*Laughter*] His lovely wife was not amused. [*Laughter*]

Most days, you can find Bennie at home down in Opelika, Alabama, tending his garden or his pontoon boat out on the lake. He's been married to Mary for 58 years. He's a proud father of five, grandfather of six; at 80, still going strong. A couple years ago, he came here to the White House with his fellow veterans for a breakfast we had on Veterans Day. He tells folk he was the only person he knows who has spilled his dessert in the White House. [*Laughter*] And I just have to correct you, that makes two of us. [*Laughter*] I've messed up my tie. I've messed up my pants. [*Laughter*]

But in the spring of 1966, Bennie was just 32 years old, on his second tour in Vietnam. He and his fellow Green Berets were at an isolated camp along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. A huge North Vietnamese force attacked, bombarding Bennie and his comrades with mortars and white phosphorus. At a time, it was nearly impossible to move without being wounded or killed. But Bennie ran into enemy fire again and again: to retrieve supplies and ammo; to carry the wounded to safety; to man the mortar pit, holding off wave after wave of enemy assaults. Three times, explosions blasted him out of that mortar pit, and three times, he returned.

I have to be honest, in a battle and daring escape that lasted 4 days, Bennie performed so many acts of bravery, we actually don't have time to talk about all of them. Let me just mention three.

On the first day, Bennie was helping load a wounded American onto a helicopter. A Vietnamese soldier jumped onto the helo trying to

escape the battle and aimed his weapon directly at the wounded soldier, ready to shoot. Bennie stepped in, shielded his comrade, placing himself directly in the line of fire, helping to save his wounded comrade.

At another point in the battle, Bennie and a few other soldiers were trapped in the mortar pit, covered in shrapnel and smoking debris. Their only exit was blocked by enemy machine gun fire. So Bennie thought fast. He dug a hole out of the pit and snuck out the other side. As another American escaped through that hole, he was shot in the leg. An enemy soldier charged him, hoping to capture a live POW, and Bennie fired, taking out that enemy and pulling his fellow American to safety.

By the third day of battle, Bennie and a few others had managed to escape into the jungle. He had cuts and wounds all over his body, but he refused to be evacuated. When a rescue helicopter arrived, Bennie insisted that others go instead. And so, on the third night, Bennie, wounded and bleeding, found himself with his men up on that jungle hill, exhausted and surrounded, with the enemy closing in. And after all they had been through, as if it weren't enough, there was something more—you can't make this up—there in the jungle, they heard the growls of a tiger. [*Laughter*]

It turns out that tiger might have been the best thing that happened to Bennie in those—during those days because, he says, "the North Vietnamese were more scared of that tiger than they were of us." [*Laughter*] So the enemy fled. Bennie and his squad made their escape. And they were rescued, finally, the next morning.

In Bennie's life, we see the enduring service of our men and women in uniform. He went on to serve a third tour in Vietnam, a total of more than two decades in uniform. After he retired, he earned his master's degree—actually not one, but two. Opened up an accounting firm. Taught adult education classes. Became national commander of the Legion of Valor, a veterans organization. So he has earned his retirement, despite what he says. [*Laughter*] He's living outside Auburn. And yes, he is a fan of the Auburn Tigers, although I did a poll of the family, and there are some Crimson Tide fans here. [*Laughter*] So there's obviously some divisions.

But Bennie will tell you that he owes everything to the men he served with in Vietnam, especially the five who gave their lives in that battle. Every member of his unit was killed or wounded. Every single one was recognized for their service. Today we're joined by some of the men who served with Bennie, including Major John Bradford, the soldier that Bennie shielded in that helicopter, and Major Wayne Murray, the soldier Bennie saved from being captured. And I'd ask them and all our Vietnam veterans who are here today to please stand or raise your hand and to be recognized.

And now I'd ask that the citation be read.

[*Lt. Cmdr. Malzone read the citation. The President then presented the medal, assisted by Lt. Col. Wagner.*]

Over the decades, our Vietnam veterans didn't always receive the thanks and respect they deserved. That's a fact. But as we have been reminded again today, our Vietnam vets were patriots and are patriots. You served with valor. You made us proud. And your service is with us for eternity. So, no matter how long it takes, no matter how many years go by, we will continue to express our gratitude for your extraordinary service.

May God watch over Don Sloat and all those who have sacrificed for our country. May God keep safe those who wear our country's uniform and veterans like Bennie Adkins. May God continue to bless the United States of America.

At this point, I'd ask our chaplain to return to the stage for the benediction.

[*Maj. Gen. Donald L. Rutherford, USA, Army Chief of Chaplains, said a prayer.*]

And at this point, I would welcome everybody to join the Sloat family and the Adkins family for a reception. I hear the food is pretty good. [*Laughter*] And once again, to all of you who serve and your families who serve along

with them, the Nation is grateful. And your Commander in Chief could not be prouder.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Karen McCaslin and Kathy Sloat, sisters of S4 Sloat. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citations.

Remarks on the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia
September 16, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated. I want to thank Dr. Frieden and everybody here at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention for welcoming me here today. Tom and his team just gave me an update on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, our efforts to help mobilize the international community to fight it, and the steps that we're taking to keep people here at home safe.

Tom and his team are doing outstanding work. And between the specialists they have on the ground in West Africa and here at headquarters, they've got hundreds of professionals who are working tirelessly on this issue. This is the largest international response in the history of the CDC. After this, I'll be meeting with some of these men and women, including some who recently returned from the frontlines of the outbreak. And they represent public service at its very best. And so I just want them to know how much the American people appreciate them. Many of them are serving far away from home, away from their families. They are doing heroic work and serving in some unbelievably challenging conditions, working through exhaustion, day and night, and many have volunteered to go back. So we are very, very proud of them.

Their work and our efforts across the Government is an example of what happens when America leads in confronting some major global challenges. Faced with this outbreak, the world is looking to us, the United States, and it's a responsibility that we embrace. We're prepared to take leadership on this to provide the kinds of capabilities that only America has and to mobilize the world in ways that only America can do. That's what we're doing as we speak.

First and foremost, I want the American people to know that our experts, here at the CDC and across our Government, agree that the chances of an Ebola outbreak here in the United States are extremely low. We've been taking the necessary precautions, including working with countries in West Africa to increase screening at airports so that someone with the virus doesn't get on a plane for the United States. In the unlikely event that someone with Ebola does reach our shores, we've taken new measures so that we're prepared here at home. We're working to help flight crews identify people who are sick, and more labs across our country now have the capacity to quickly test for the virus. We're working with hospitals to make sure that they are prepared and to ensure that our doctors, our nurses, and our medical staff are trained, are ready, and are able to deal with a possible case safely.

And here, I've got to commend everybody at Emory University Hospital. I just had the opportunity to meet with Doctors Gartland and Ribner and members of their team and the nurses who—sorry, doctors, but having been in hospitals, I know—[*laughter*]—they're the ones really doing the work. And I had a chance to thank them for their extraordinary efforts in helping to provide care for the first Americans who recently contracted the disease in Africa. The first two of those patients were released last month and continue to improve. And it's a reminder for the American people that, should any cases appear in the United States, we have world-class facilities and professionals ready to

respond. And we have effective surveillance mechanisms in place.

I should mention, by the way, that I had a chance to see Dr. Brantly in the Oval Office this morning. And although he is still having to gain back some weight, he looks great. He looks strong, and we are incredibly grateful to him and his family for the service that he has rendered to people who are a lot less lucky than all of us.

As we all know, however, West Africa is facing a very different situation, especially in the hardest hit countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and in Guinea. Tom and others recently returned from the region, and the scenes that they describe are just horrific. More than 2,400 men, women, and children are known to have died, and we strongly suspect that the actual death toll is higher than that. Hospitals, clinics, and the few treatment centers that do exist have been completely overwhelmed. An already very weak public health system is near collapse in these countries. Patients are being turned away, and people are literally dying in the streets.

Now, here's the hard truth: In West Africa, Ebola is now an epidemic of the likes that we have not seen before. It's spiraling out of control. It is getting worse. It's spreading faster and exponentially. Today, thousands of people in West Africa are infected. That number could rapidly grow to tens of thousands. And if the outbreak is not stopped now, we could be looking at hundreds of thousands of people infected, with profound political and economic and security implications for all of us. So this is an epidemic that is not just a threat to regional security, it's a potential threat to global security if these countries break down, if their economies break down, if people panic. That has profound effects on all of us, even if we are not directly contracting the disease.

And that's why, 2 months ago, I directed my team to make this a national security priority. We're working this across our entire Government, which is why today I'm joined by leaders throughout my administration, including from my national security team.

And we've devoted significant resources in support of our strategy with four goals in mind. Number one, to control the outbreak. Number two, to address the ripple effects of local economies and communities to prevent a truly massive humanitarian disaster. Number three, to coordinate a broader global response. And number four, to urgently build up a public health system in these countries for the future, not just in West Africa, but in countries that don't have a lot of resources generally.

Now, this is a daunting task. But here's what gives us hope. The world knows how to fight this disease. It's not a mystery. We know the science. We know how to prevent it from spreading. We know how to care for those who contract it. We know that if we take the proper steps, we can save lives. But we have to act fast. We can't dawdle on this one. We have to move with force and make sure that we are catching this as best we can, given that it has already broken out in ways that we had not seen before.

So today I'm announcing a major increase in our response. At the request of the Liberian Government, we're going to establish a military command center in Liberia to support civilian efforts across the region, similar to our response after the Haiti earthquake. It's going to be commanded by Major General Darryl Williams, a commander of our armed—Army forces in Africa. He just arrived today and is now on the ground in Liberia. And our forces are going to bring their expertise in command and control, in logistics, in engineering. And our Department of Defense is better at that, our Armed Services are better at that, than any organization on Earth.

We're going to create an airbridge to get health workers and medical supplies into West Africa faster. We're going to establish a staging area in Senegal to help distribute personnel and aid on the ground more quickly. We are going to create a new training site to train thousands of health workers so they can effectively and safely care for more patients. Personnel from the U.S. Public Health Service will deploy to the new field hospitals that we're setting up in Liberia. And USAID will join

with international partners and local communities in a Community Care Campaign to distribute supplies and information kits to hundreds of thousands of families so they can better protect themselves.

We're also going to build additional treatment units, including new isolation spaces and more than a thousand beds. And in all our efforts, the safety of our personnel will remain a top priority. Meanwhile, our scientists continue their urgent research in the hope of finding new treatments and perhaps vaccines. And today I'm calling on Congress to approve the funding that we've requested so that we can carry on with all these critical efforts.

Today, the United States is doing even more. But this is a global threat, and it demands a truly global response. International organizations just have to move faster than they have up until this point. More nations need to contribute experienced personnel, supplies, and funding that's needed, and they need to deliver on what they pledge quickly. Charities and individual philanthropists have given generously, and they can make a big difference. And so we're not restricting these efforts to governmental organizations, we also need NGOs and private philanthropies to work with us in a coordinated fashion in order to maximize the impact of our response.

This week, the United States will chair an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council. Next week, I'll join U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to continue mobilizing the international community around this effort. And then, at the White House, we're going to bring more nations together to strengthen our global health security so that we can better prevent, detect, and respond to future outbreaks before they become epidemics.

This is actually something that we had announced several months ago at the G–7 meeting. We determined that this has to be a top priority; this was before the Ebola outbreak. We anticipated the fact that in many of these countries with a weak public health system, if we don't have more effective surveillance, more effective facilities on the ground, and are not helping poor countries in developing their ability to catch these things quickly, that there was at least the potential of seeing these kinds of outbreaks. And sadly, we now see that our predictions were correct. It gives more urgency to this effort—a global health initiative—that we have been pushing internationally.

Let me just close by saying this: The scenes that we're witnessing in West Africa today are absolutely gut wrenching. In one account over the weekend, we read about a family in Liberia. The disease had already killed the father. The mother was cradling a sick and listless 5-year-old son. Her other son, 10-years-old, was dying too. They finally reached a treatment center, but they couldn't get in. And said a relative, "We are just sitting."

And these men and women and children are just sitting, waiting to die, right now. And it doesn't have to be this way.

The reality is that this epidemic is going to get worse before it gets better. But right now the world still has an opportunity to save countless lives. Right now the world has the responsibility to act, to step up, and to do more. The United States of America intends to do more. We are going to keep leading in this effort. We're going to do our part, and we're going to continue to make sure that the world understands the need for them to step alongside us as well in order for us to not just save the lives of families like the one I just discussed, but ultimately, to make sure that this doesn't have the kinds of spillover effects that become even more difficult to control.

So thank you very much to the entire team that's already doing this work. And please know that you've got your President and Commander in Chief behind you. All right?

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:01 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Bryce Gartland, vice president of operations, and Bruce Ribner, director of the infectious disease unit, Emory University Hospital; Kent P. Brantly, former medical director, Samaritan's Purse Ebola Case Management Center in Monrovia, Liberia; U.S. Ebola patient Nancy Writebol, a missionary who contracted the disease in Liberia

and was discharged on August 19; and Jatu, Fotay, and Zennah Zombo and Abraham Sesky, Liberians infected with the Ebola virus and awaiting treatment.

Statement on the First Anniversary of the Shooting at the Washington Navy Yard

September 16, 2014

One year ago, our dedicated military and civilian personnel at the Washington Navy Yard were targeted in an unspeakable act of violence that took the lives of 12 American patriots. As we remember men and women taken from us so senselessly, we keep close their family and friends, stand with the survivors who continue to heal, and pay tribute to the first responders who acted with skill and bravery. At the same time, we continue to improve security at our country's bases and installations to protect our military and civilian personnel who help keep us safe. One year ago, 12 Americans went to work to protect and strengthen the country they loved. Today, we must do the same, rejecting atrocities like these as the new normal and renewing our call for commonsense reforms that respect our traditions while reducing the gun violence that shatters too many American families every day.

Remarks at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

September 17, 2014

The President. Hello, MacDill! I want to thank General Austin for his introduction—Lloyd, for your exceptional leadership. Were you about to sneak off the stage?

General Lloyd J. Austin III, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command. Yes, sir. Yes, sir, I was.

The President. Go ahead. [*Laughter*] The—it's better when Lloyd is not standing next to me because I don't look small. [*Laughter*] General Austin has done such extraordinary work, both commanding our forces in Iraq, today as the commander of CENTCOM. I want to thank somebody else for his own lifetime of service to America, first as a soldier who fought in Vietnam, now as our Secretary of Defense: Chuck Hagel. Give it up for Chuck.

Chuck was here a few weeks ago to welcome the new head of Special Operations Command, General Joe Votel. Give Joe a big round of applause. For those of you who don't know, 13 years ago, Joe led his team of Army Rangers as they jumped into Afghanistan to establish our first base there by jumping out of the plane alongside them. So Joe is a tough guy, and he knows what he is doing, and I can't think of somebody who is more qualified to head up our Special Forces. And so we want to thank Joe for accepting this assignment.

Your Member of Congress, Kathy Castor, is here. Give Kathy a big round of applause. There she is right there. Your wing commander, Colonel Dan Tulley. Your senior enlisted leaders: Command Sergeant Major Chris Greca; Command Sergeant Major Chris Faris; Chief Master Sergeant Matt Lusson. And most of all, I want to salute all the spouses and military families on base, because let's be honest, they're the force behind the force. I spent time with some of them last night, and it's clear why our military is the finest fighting force in the history of the world, and it's because our military families are serving right alongside you.

I know we've got some Air Force in the house. It's great to be at the home of the Sixth Air Mobility Wing. The 927th Air Refueling Wing. CENTCOM. SOCOM. We've got some Army here.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Navy.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Marines.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. Coast Guard. [*Laughter*] We love our Coast Guard. [*Laughter*]

Now, I'm not here to give a long speech. But what I really wanted to do is come down and just shake some hands. I just received a briefing from General Austin and met with your commanders. I met with representatives from more than 40 nations. It is a true team effort here at MacDill. And I came here to say the same thing that I've been saying to troops on bases across this country, around the world, and a few months ago in Bagram, and that is, thank you. On behalf of the American people, I want to thank all of you for your service; I want to thank all of you for your sacrifice; I want to thank you for your commitment to each other and your commitment to our country. As your Commander in Chief, I could not be more proud of each and every one of you.

For nearly 75 years, the men and women of MacDill have lived a commitment to "Airmen, Mission, and Community." You've supported our troops through each generation of challenges. And as home to both Central Command and Special Operations Command, you have shouldered some of the heaviest responsibilities in dealing with the challenges of this new century.

For more than a decade—ever since that awful September morning 13 years ago, ever since Joe and his Rangers took that jump a month later—you and all our men and women in uniform have borne the burden of war. Some of you—our quiet professionals, our Special Forces—were among the first to go. When the decision was made to go into Iraq, you were there. When we refocused the fight back to Afghanistan, you were there. You have served with skill and honor and commitment and professionalism.

And some of you carry the wounds of these wars. I know some of you lost friends. Today we remember all who have given their lives in these wars. And we stand with their families, who've given more than most Americans can ever imagine. And we honor those sacrifices forever.

But here is what I want every single one of you to know: Because of you—this 9/11 generation of heroes has done everything asked of you and met every mission tasked to you—we are doing what we set out to do. Because of you, Usama bin Laden is no more. Because of you, the core Al Qaida leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been decimated. Because of you, Afghans are reclaiming their communities; Afghan forces have taken the lead for their country's security. In 3 months, because of you, our combat mission will be over in Afghanistan and our war in Afghanistan will come to a responsible end. That's because of you.

You and our counterterrorism professionals have prevented terrorist attacks. You've saved American lives. You've made our homeland more secure. But we've always known that the end of the war in Afghanistan didn't mean the end of threats or challenges to America.

Here at MacDill, you knew this and have known this as well as anybody. You played a central role in our combat and counterterrorism operations. You make sure our troops and pilots get what they need in order to get the job done. You train forces around the world so countries can take responsibility for their own security. The Sixth Air Mobility Wing is continuously deployed, supporting our humanitarian and combat operations around the world, "Ready To Defend." And your work is as vital as ever.

Because in an uncertain world full of breathtaking change, the one constant is American leadership. In a world where technology provides a small group of killers with the ability to do terrible harm, it is America that has the capacity and the will to mobilize the world against terrorists, including the group in Syria and Iraq known as ISIL. Our intelligence community, as I said last week, has not yet detected specific plots from these terrorists against America. But its leaders have repeatedly threatened America and our allies. And right now these terrorists pose a threat to the people of Iraq, the people of Syria, the broader Middle East, including our personnel, our Embassies, our consulates, our facilities there. And if left unchecked, they could pose a growing threat to the United States.

So, last month, I gave the order for our military to begin taking targeted action against ISIL. And since then, our brave pilot and crews, with your help, have conducted more than 160 airstrikes against these terrorists. Because of your efforts, we've been able to protect our personnel and our facilities and kill ISIL fighters and given space for Iraqi and Kurdish forces to reclaim key territory. They've helped our partners on the ground break ISIL sieges, helped rescue civilians cornered on a mountain, helped save the lives of thousands of innocent men, women, and children. That's what you've done.

Now going forward, as I announced last week, we're going to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy. And whether in Iraq or in Syria, these terrorists will learn the same thing that the leaders of Al Qaida already know: We mean what we say; our reach is long; if you threaten America, you will find no safe haven. We will find you eventually.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. But—and this is something I want to emphasize—this is not and will not be America's fight alone. One of the things we've learned over this last decade is, America can make a decisive difference. But I want to be clear: The American forces that have been deployed to Iraq do not and will not have a combat mission. They will support Iraqi forces on the ground as they fight for their own country against these terrorists.

As your Commander in Chief, I will not commit you and the rest of our Armed Forces to fighting another ground war in Iraq. After a decade of massive ground deployments, it is more effective to use our unique capabilities in support of partners on the ground so they can secure their own countries' futures. And that's the only solution that will succeed over the long term.

We'll use our air power. We will train and equip our partners. We will advise them, and we will assist them. We will lead a broad coalition of countries who have a stake in this fight. Because this is not simply America versus ISIL; this is the people of the region fighting against ISIL. It is the world rejecting the brutality of ISIL in favor of a better future for our children and our children's children, all of them.

But we're not going to do this alone. And the one thing we have learned is, is that when we do things alone and the countries—the people of those countries—aren't doing it for themselves, as soon as we leave we start getting into the same problems. So we've got to do things differently.

This is why we've spent the past several weeks building a coalition to aid in these efforts. And because we're leading in the right way, more nations are joining us. Overall, more than 40 countries so far have offered assistance to the broad campaign against ISIL. Some nations will assist from the air, and already, France and the United Kingdom are flying with us over Iraq, with others committed to join this effort.

Some nations will help us support the forces fighting these terrorists on the ground. And already Saudi Arabia has agreed to host our efforts to train and equip Syrian opposition forces. Australia and Canada will send military advisers to Iraq. German paratroopers will offer training. Other nations have helped resupply arms and equipment to forces in Iraq, including the Kurdish Peshmerga.

Arab nations have agreed to strengthen their support for Iraq's new Government and to do their part in all the aspects of the fight against ISIL. And our partners will help to cut off ISIL funding and gather intelligence and stem the flow of foreign fighters into and out of the Middle East.

And meanwhile, nearly 30 nations have helped us with humanitarian relief to help innocent civilians who've been driven from their homes, whether they are Sunni or Shia or Christian or Yazidi or any other religious minority.

And yesterday at the White House, I met with an outstanding American leader, retired Marine General John Allen. He worked with Iraqi tribal leaders as they fought to reclaim their own communities from terrorists, and he's going to serve as America's Special Envoy

to build and coordinate this incredible coalition. And I've called on Congress to make sure you've got all the authorities and resources you need to get the job done.

But the point is, we cannot do for the Iraqis what they must do for themselves. We can't take the place of Arab partners in securing their own region and a better future for their own people. We can't do it for them, but this is an effort that calls on America's unique abilities—and responsibilities—to lead.

In a world that's more crowded and more connected, it is America that has the unique capability to mobilize against an organization like ISIL. In a world full of broader social challenges, it is America that has the unique capability and know-how to help contain and combat a threat like Ebola, the epidemic in Africa. And yesterday, on top of all that we're already doing to help, I announced a major boost to our response. We're establishing a military command center in Liberia, at the request of their Government, to support civilian efforts across the region. And Major General Darryl Williams, commander of our Army forces in Africa, arrived yesterday. He's already on the ground. And our Armed Forces will bring their unique, unrivaled expertise in command and control and logistics and engineering, including creating an airbridge to get health workers and medical supplies into West Africa faster. And obviously, in all our efforts, the safety of our personnel will remain a top priority.

In the nation of Liberia, one person who heard this news yesterday was reported to say: "We have been praying to get the disease wiped out of our country. So, if the coming of U.S. troops will help us get that done, we [will] be happy." And that's the story across the board. If there is a hurricane, if there is a typhoon, if there is some sort of crisis, if there is an earthquake, if there's a need for a rescue mission, when the world is threatened, when the world needs help, it calls on America. Even the countries that complain about America—[*laughter*]—when they need help, who do they call?

Audience members. America.

The President. They call us. And then America calls on you.

To all the service men and women here and around the world: We ask a lot of you. And any mission involves risk. And any mission separates you from your families. And sending our servicemembers into harm's way is not a decision I ever take lightly; it is the hardest decision I make as President. Nothing else comes close. I do it only when I know the mission is vital to the security of this country that we love. I do it only because I know that you're the best there is at what you do. And frankly, there just aren't a lot of other folks who can perform in the same ways. In fact, there are none. And there are some things only we can do. There are some capabilities only we have.

That's because of you: your dedication, your skill, your work, your families supporting you, your training, your command structure. Our Armed Forces are unparalleled and unique. And so, when we've got a big problem somewhere around the world, it falls on our shoulders. And sometimes, that's tough. But that's what sets us apart. That's why we're America. That's what the stars and stripes are all about.

And between war and recession, this has been a challenging start to this new century. We've been busy. This has not been an easy 14 years. And many of you came of age in these years. But I want you to know, as I stand here with you today, I am as confident as I have ever been that this century, just like the last century, will be led by America. It will be and is an American century.

At home, we're bouncing back, better positioning ourselves to win the future than any nation on Earth. Overseas, we're moving forward, answering the call to lead. And even when it seems like our politics is just dividing us, I want you to remember that when it comes to supporting you and your families, the American people stand united. We support you. We are proud of you. We are in awe of your skill and your service. Only 1 percent of Americans may wear the uniform and shoulder the weight of special responsibilities that you do, but 100 percent of Americans need to support you and your families—100 percent.

This is a moment of American leadership, and thanks to you, it is a moment that we are going to meet. And I will keep standing up for your interests and for our security and for the human rights and dignity of people wherever they live. And we're going to keep on working with our allies and partners to take out the terrorists who threaten us wherever they hide. Because in stark contrast to those who only know how to kill and maim and tear down, we keep on building up and offering a future of progress and hope. And like the generations before us, we're willing to defend this country we love. We're willing to help others on this planet that we share. We're protected by patriots like you. And for all those reasons, the United States of America will remain the greatest force for freedom that the world has ever known.

Thank you very much, everybody. I'm proud of you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:04 p.m. in the Short Fitness and Sports Center. In his remarks, he referred to Col. Daniel H. Tulley, USAF, commander, Sixth Air Mobility Wing, MacDill Air Force Base; CSM Christopher K. Greca, USA, senior enlisted leader, U.S. Central Command; CSM Chris Faris, USA, senior enlisted adviser, U.S. Special Operations Command; and Sgt. Maj. Matthew S. Lusson, USAF, chief master sergeant, 53d Wing, Eglin Air Force Base. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Legislation To Train and Equip Syrian Opposition Forces

September 17, 2014

Today the United States House of Representatives took an important step forward as our Nation unites to confront the threat posed by the terrorist group known as ISIL. Last week, I spoke to the American people about what the United States will do with our friends and allies to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. I made clear that we must pursue a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy, and a bipartisan coalition in the House voted to support a critical component of that strategy. As we continue to take targeted military action against ISIL terrorist targets, today's vote is another step closer to having the authorization to train and equip vetted elements of the moderate Syrian opposition so they can defend themselves against, and ultimately push back on, ISIL forces in Syria, while creating the conditions for the political solution necessary to solve Syria's crisis once and for all. This training program will be conducted outside of Syria, in partnership with regional countries. There will be no U.S. military personnel in Syria as part of this program. We've learned over the last decade, and through our successful campaign to degrade Al Qaida, that it is more effective to use America's unique capabilities to take out terrorist targets in support of our partners' efforts on the ground to secure their own future. Countries in the region and around the world are coming together to confront ISIL. The United States can make a decisive difference. Today's House vote is a step towards making that difference, and I urge the Senate to pass this bill without delay.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.J. Res. 124; and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, or Support Terrorism
September 17, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism declared in Executive Order 13224 of September 23, 2001, is to continue in effect beyond September 23, 2014.

The crisis constituted by the grave acts of terrorism and threats of terrorism committed by foreign terrorists, including the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in New York and Pennsylvania and against the Pentagon, and the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on United States nationals or the United States that led to the declaration of a national emergency on September 23, 2001, has not been resolved. These actions continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13224 with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
September 17, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the United States-Chile Extradition Treaty
September 17, 2014

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Extradition Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Chile (the "Treaty"), signed at Washington on June 5, 2013. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty would replace the outdated extradition treaty between the United States and Chile, signed at Santiago on April 17, 1900 (the "1900 Treaty"). The Treaty follows generally the form and content of other extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States. It would replace an outmoded list of extraditable offenses with a modern "dual criminality" approach, which would enable extradition for such offenses as money laundering and other newer offenses not appearing on the list from the 1900 Treaty. The Treaty also contains a modernized "political offense" clause and provides that extradition shall not be refused based on the nationality of the person sought. Finally, the Treaty incorporates a series of procedural improvements to streamline and speed the extradition process.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to its ratification.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
September 17, 2014.

Remarks at the Congressional Picnic
September 17, 2014

Hello, everybody! It is a perfect night for a picnic. I'm thrilled that everybody is here. I took off my tie; I noticed some of you didn't get the memo. [*Laughter*] But I know that a lot of you are coming straight from work. I'm not going to make a long speech. I want to shake as many hands as possible. I hope you guys are having a wonderful time.

I want to start off by saying thank you to House Members—Republican and Democrat—who came together today to pass an important component on our strategy for dealing with this terrible terrorist organization known as ISIL. And I want to in particular thank Speaker Boehner and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi for showing us that when it comes to America's national security, America is united. So I very much appreciate all of you in the efforts that you made there.

And that brings up this more general point. Look, we've gone through, just in the last decade and a half, the worst attack on our homeland in our history, the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. We continue to face significant challenges. But I came from Tampa, where we have the Central Command and talked to our troops this morning. And in talking to them and seeing the dedication and the effort and professionalism that they make, I was reminded once again, as I'm reminded every time I travel around the country, that the American people are good and they are strong and they are resilient. And because of them, we bounce back from anything.

And America is now positioned better than we could have ever imagined if we continue to act in the interests of all of us and if every once in a while we're willing to set aside politics and try to get something done. There's no doubt that we can make sure our schools work better. There's no doubt that we can make sure that our roads and our bridges and our infrastructure works the way it should. There's no doubt that, since we still have the most innovative companies in the world, that we can succeed and that we can continue to put money into research and development and cure diseases and continue to lead the world when it comes to not just security, but also dealing with issues like Ebola and making sure that more people are safe and well housed and well fed and children and girls are getting the kind of education they deserve.

All these things we can do. And so, hopefully, a picnic like this just reminds us of the fact that there are a lot of people all across the country counting on us to be able to work together. That doesn't mean we don't have strong passions and strong arguments, but it also means that every once in a while we've got to set those aside, embrace compromise, and try to get some stuff done. That's what people are looking for, and today, I think, on national security at least, we showed that we could.

The only other thing I want to say is thank you to the families. It is—Michelle was traveling to St. Jude's today to be with the amazing kids there and the doctors and staff who help families going through really tough diseases, but she would be the first one to testify that being married to a politician is not easy. [*Laughter*] And being the partner of a politician, being the child of a politician, it's hard. And sometimes, you see your loved one attacked, and sometimes, you see them not appreciated, and they're away too much, and you're having to shoulder some of the burdens of family. And so to all the spouses, all the children, everybody who helps support our public servants and our Members of Congress, I just want to say thank you to you as well for the great job that you do. We really, really appreciate it.

And finally, please try to eat more, because we always have leftovers after this thing. [*Laughter*] All right? I am going to swing down the rope line. I want to shake as many hands as I can. I will tell you in advance that selfies are a little tough just because if I'm doing 2,000 selfies, then we won't be done until, like, 10 in the evening. I will make exceptions for little people, but you have to actually be little. [*Laugh-*

ter] And I mean young, I don't mean short. [*Laughter*] All right?

So thank you very much, everybody. Have a great time. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:05 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.J. Res. 124; and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine
September 18, 2014

President Obama. Well, it is a great pleasure to welcome President Poroshenko to the Oval Office. He and I have been working together a lot over the last several months. And as I told him personally, and I want to repeat publicly, I think his leadership has been absolutely critical at a very, very important time in Ukraine's history.

Obviously, we have watched over the last several months as the people of Ukraine have declared their desire for a sovereign, independent economic and foreign policy that promises them freedom and prosperity and self-determination. And President Poroshenko's election, I think, represented those aspirations of the Ukrainian people.

Unfortunately, what we've also seen is Russian aggression—first in Crimea and most recently in portions of eastern Ukraine—that have not only violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, but have also been designed to undermine these critical reform efforts that have been taking place in Ukraine.

I am very proud that the United States has led the international community and our European partners in making sure that there is a cost to Russia for its aggression in Ukraine. We have applied some of the toughest coordinated sanctions that we've ever seen between the transatlantic community, which are having a significant impact on the Russian economy. And we have consistently said that not only do we support Ukraine's sovereignty and independence in words, but we've also been supporting it in deeds.

And at the Wales Summit, you saw all 28 NATO countries recommit themselves to the NATO-Ukraine partnership and commit to assisting Ukraine in its security concerns. We have provided significant financial assistance to help Ukraine bridge this period of transition from the old ways of doing things to a new and more modern economy, and that includes a billion-dollar loan guarantee from the United States, as well as hundreds of millions of dollars that we've provided in assistance.

I'm pleased that during this meeting, we reaffirmed that commitment to Ukraine, and we are providing additional assistance, both economic and security assistance, to Ukraine to make sure that not only are they able to weather this storm economically, but they're also going to be able to continue to build up an effective security force to defend themselves from aggression.

And we are going to continue to seek to mobilize the international community to say to Russia that Ukraine desires to have a good relationship with all its neighbors, both east and west, and that there should be a way in which Ukraine is able to negotiate and then trade and continue the people-to-people links between Ukraine and Russia, but that Russia cannot dictate to them their ability to work effectively with other partners in order to better the situation for the Ukrainian people.

I want to commend President Poroshenko for having helped to not only broker a ceasefire, but also to push through some very difficult legislation that can improve the perception in eastern Ukraine that they are fully represented and that they are able to determine many of their local affairs in a way that gives them confidence.

And that those were not easy laws that President Poroshenko passed, but I think they indicated his commitment to an inclusive Ukraine, his commitment to a Ukraine that has decentralization and empowers local communities.

But also, I think President Poroshenko has been very clear that Ukraine needs to stay intact and that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine is nonnegotiable.

And so let me just say that in addition to the concrete expressions of support through security assistance and economic assistance, we are going to continue to help to mobilize the international community towards a diplomatic solution.

I have great confidence that President Poroshenko is balancing a lot of different variables here in a very difficult situation. But he's the right man for the job. He's been working very hard. He's committed to upcoming elections that will further allow the people of Ukraine to set the direction for their country. And we are prepared to support Ukraine in negotiations with Russia in order to make sure that the Ukrainian people can enjoy the kind of freedom and prosperity that is their right.

And so, President Poroshenko, congratulations on the excellent work that you've done. You have a strong friend not only in me personally, but I think, as you saw in Congress today, you have strong bipartisan support here in the United States. And the people of America stand with the people of Ukraine. We wish you not only luck, but you know that you also have our strong commitment and friendship.

So thank you.

President Poroshenko. Thank you, Mr. President. I want to start with the words of thanks for the President Obama for my invitation. And this is very symbolic for all Ukrainian people to be here today and to receive such enormous support, which was demonstrated today under all the levels. I was impressed today by the level of support—the bipartisan support—which was demonstrated in the Congress.

And I want to thank you to the President for his leadership in the world, for protecting Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. This is a true leadership defending democracy and freedom.

And we started this coordination in Warsaw when we together had a meeting during the 25th anniversary of the *Solidarnist'*. And from the very, very first moment, I feel how personally President Obama is deeply involved in the process of protecting freedom and democracy in Ukraine and the way how the situation has developed. And the question we discussed today is the whole sphere where we can have improved our cooperation.

Today we discussed the security and defense sphere, and we undertake the very responsible and necessary decisions. Today we discussed the economic and financial sphere, and we were—thanks that the United States of America do a very great job to support us in a very difficult time. We especially discussed the energy question, and I can announce then the next week we will have an American team in Kiev, where we can discuss all the energy questions prompting from the energy-saving steps to be undertaken and the—avoid significant problems during this winter.

We think that it is vitally important to renew the cooperation with Russia for the gas supply and to undertake a very important step for providing the energy security for all Europe. And I just want to confirm—declare that we are ready for all these discussions.

I think that the—it would be extremely important for us, the international coordination. We are expecting that today the U.N. Security Council meeting will also pay some attention to the Ukrainian question.

And I just want to deliver the main messages. So the top priority for me as a Ukrainian President, for the Ukrainian people, for the American President, and for the American people is the peace. And the only way how we can deescalate the situation on the east of my country is the peace process and the peace plan, which included the cease-fire; inclusive dialogue inside of Ukraine; withdrawing Russian troops from my territory; closing the border for troops, for weapons and ammunition; releasing—immediately releasing all the hostages. And that is what the whole world is waiting from us.

And progress which we're—most probably delivered in the near future. We're expecting the continuation of the Minsk dialogue in the very near days. And we really hope that the cease-fire, which already lasting for the 12

days, will bring—will transform to a real peace, which can help us to save Donetsk and Luhansk from the very difficult situation the people of which appear now.

I think that they're—I thank very much to the President for the very fruitful, very open, very straightforward dialogue, and I thank you for the decision we reached today. I thank that the—your position as the friend of Ukraine: friend in need is a friend indeed. You're a real friend, of course.

President Obama. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:21 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks on Congressional Passage of Legislation To Train and Equip Syrian Opposition Forces

September 18, 2014

Good evening. Today the United States continues to build a broad international coalition to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL. As part of the air campaign, France will join in strikes against ISIL targets in Iraq. And as one of our oldest and closest allies, France is a strong partner in our efforts against terrorism, and we're pleased that French and American servicemembers will once again work together on behalf of our shared security and our shared values.

More broadly, more than 40 countries—including Arab nations—have now offered assistance as part of this coalition. This includes support for Iraqi forces, strengthening the Iraqi Government, providing humanitarian aid to Iraqi civilians, and doing their part in the fight against ISIL.

Here at home, I'm pleased that Congress—a majority of Democrats and a majority of Republicans, in both the House and the Senate—have now voted to support a key element of our strategy: our plan to train and equip the opposition in Syria so they can help push back these terrorists. As I said last week, I believe that we're strongest as a nation when the President and Congress work together. And I want to thank leaders in Congress for the speed and seriousness with which they approached this urgent issue, in keeping with the bipartisanship that is the hallmark of American foreign policy at its best.

These Syrian opposition forces are fighting both the brutality of ISIL terrorists and the tyranny of the Asad regime. We had already ramped up our assistance, including military assistance, to the Syrian opposition. With this new effort, we'll provide training and equipment to help them grow stronger and take on ISIL terrorists inside Syria. This program will be hosted outside of Syria, in partnership with Arab countries, and it will be matched by our increasing support for Iraqi Government and Kurdish forces in Iraq.

This is in keeping with a key principle of our strategy: The American forces that have been deployed to Iraq do not and will not have a combat mission; their mission is to advise and assist our partners on the ground. As I told our troops yesterday, we can join with allies and partners to destroy ISIL without American troops fighting another ground war in the Middle East.

The strong bipartisan support in Congress for this new training effort shows the world that Americans are united in confronting the threat from ISIL, which has slaughtered so many innocent civilians. With their barbaric murder of two Americans, these terrorists thought they could frighten us, or intimidate us, or cause us to shrink from the world, but today they're learning the same hard lesson of petty tyrants and terrorists who have gone before.

As Americans, we do not give in to fear. And when you harm our citizens, when you threaten the United States, when you threaten our allies, it doesn't divide us, it unites us. We pull together, we stand together, to defend this country that we love and to make sure justice is done, as well as to join with those who seek a

better future of dignity and opportunity for all people.

And today, our strikes against these terrorists continue. We're taking out their terrorists. We're destroying their vehicles and equipment and stockpiles. And we salute our dedicated pilots and crews who are carrying out these missions with great courage and skill.

As Commander in Chief, I could not be more proud of their service. As I told some of our troops yesterday, the American people are united in our support for them and for their families. And as we go forward, as one Nation, I'd ask all Americans to keep our forces and their families in their thoughts and prayers. Thanks very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.J. Res. 124; and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks Announcing the "It's On Us" Campaign To Prevent Sexual Assault on College Campuses

September 19, 2014

Thank you so much, everybody. Please have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House, everybody. And thank you to Joe Biden not just for the introduction, not just for being a great Vice President, but for decades, since long before he was in his current office, Joe has brought unmatched passion to this cause. And—[*applause*]. He has.

And at a time when domestic violence was all too often seen as a private matter, Joe was out there saying that this was unacceptable. Thanks to him and so many others, last week, we were able to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the law Joe wrote, a law that transformed the way we handle domestic abuse in this country: the Violence Against Women Act.

And we're here to talk today about an issue that is a priority for me, and that's ending campus sexual assault. I want to thank all of you who are participating. I particularly want to thank Lilly for her wonderful presentation and grace. I want to thank her parents for being here. As a father of two daughters, I on the one hand am enraged about what has happened; on the other hand, am empowered to see such an incredible young woman be so strong and do so well. And we're going to be thrilled watching all of the great things she is going to be doing in her life. So the—we're really proud of her.

I want to thank the White House Council on Women and Girls. Good Job. Valerie, thank you. I want to thank our White House Adviser on Violence Against Women, the work that you do every day partnering with others to prevent the outrage, the crime of sexual violence.

We've got some outstanding lawmakers with us. Senator Claire McCaskill is right here from the great State of Missouri, who I love. And we've got Dick Blumenthal from the great State of Connecticut, as well as Congresswoman Susan Davis. So thank you so much, I'm thrilled to have you guys here.

I also want to thank other Members of Congress who are here and have worked on this issue so hard for so long. A lot of the people in this room have been on the front lines in fighting sexual assault for a long time. And along with Lilly, I want to thank all the survivors who are here today and so many others around the country. Lilly, I'm sure, took strength from a community of people—some who came before, some who were peers—who were able to summon the courage to speak out about the darkest moment of their lives. They endure pain and the fear that too often isolates victims of sexual assault. So, when they give voice to their own experiences, they're giving voice to countless others—women and men, girls and boys—who still suffer in silence.

So to the survivors who are leading the fight against sexual assault on campuses, your efforts have helped to start a movement. I know that, as Lilly described, there are times where the

fight feels lonely, and it feels as if you're dredging up stuff that you'd rather put behind you. But we're here to say today, it's not on you. This is not your fight alone. This is on all of us, every one of us, to fight campus sexual assault. You are not alone, and we have your back, and we are going to organize campus by campus, city by city, State by State. This entire country is going to make sure that we understand what this is about and that we're going to put a stop to it.

And this is a new school year. We've been working on campus sexual assault for several years, but the issue of violence against women is now in the news every day. We've started to, I think, get a better picture about what domestic violence is all about. People are talking about it. Victims are realizing they're not alone. Brave people have come forward; they're opening up about their own experiences.

And so we think today's event is all that more relevant, all that more important for us to say that campus sexual assault is no longer something we as a nation can turn away from and say that's not our problem. This is a problem that matters to all of us.

An estimated one in five women has been sexually assaulted during her college years—one in five. Of those assaults, only 12 percent are reported, and of those reported assaults, only a fraction of the offenders are punished. And while these assaults overwhelmingly happen to women, we know that men are assaulted too. Men get raped. They're even less likely to talk about it. We know that sexual assault can happen to anyone, no matter their race, their economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity. And LGBT victims can feel even more isolated, feel even more alone.

For anybody whose once normal, everyday life was suddenly shattered by an act of sexual violence, the trauma, the terror can shadow you long after one horrible attack. It lingers when you don't know where to go or who to turn to. It's there when you're forced to sit in the same class or stay in the same dorm with the person who raped you; when people are more suspicious of what you were wearing or what you were drinking, as if it's your fault, not the fault of the person who assaulted you. It's a haunting presence when the very people entrusted with your welfare fail to protect you.

Now, students work hard to get into college. I know. I'm watching Malia right now. She's a junior. [*Laughter*] She's got a lot of homework. [*Laughter*] And parents can do everything they can to support their kids' dreams of getting a good education. When they finally make it onto campus, only to be assaulted, that's not just a nightmare for them and their families; it's not just an affront to everything they've worked so hard to achieve. It is an affront to our basic humanity. It insults our most basic values as individuals and families and as a nation. We are a nation that values liberty and equality and justice. And we're a people who believe every child deserves an education that allows them to fulfill their God-given potential, free from fear of intimidation or violence. And we owe it to our children to live up to those values. So my administration is trying to do our part.

First of all, 3 years ago, we sent guidance to every school district, every college, every university that receives Federal funding, and we clarified their legal obligations to prevent and respond to sexual assault. And we reminded them that sexual violence isn't just a crime, it is a civil rights violation. And I want to acknowledge Secretary of Education Arne Duncan for his department's work in holding schools accountable and making sure that they stand up for students.

Number two, in January, I created a White House task force to prevent—a Task Force To Protect Students From Sexual Assault. Their job is to work with colleges and universities on better ways to prevent and respond to assaults, to lift up best practices. And we held conversations with thousands of people: survivors, parents, student groups, faculty, law enforcement, advocates, academics. In April, the Task Force released the first report, recommending a number of best practices for colleges and universities to keep our kids safe. And these are tested, and they are commonsense measures, like campus surveys to figure out the scope of the problem, giving survivors a safe place to go and a trusted person to talk to, training school

officials in how to handle trauma. Because when you read some of the accounts, you think, what were they thinking? I mean, you just get a sense of too many people in charge dropping the ball, fumbling something that should be taken with the most—the utmost seriousness and the utmost care.

Number three, we're stepping up enforcement efforts and increasing the transparency of our efforts. So we're reviewing existing laws to make sure they're adequate. And we're going to keep on working with educational institutions across the country to help them appropriately respond to these crimes.

So that's what we have been doing, but there's always more that we can do. And today we're taking a step and joining with people across the country to change our culture and help prevent sexual assault from happening. Because that's where prevention—that's what prevention is going to require. We've got to have a fundamental shift in our culture.

As far as we've come, the fact is that from sports leagues to pop culture to politics, our society still does not sufficiently value women. We still don't condemn sexual assault as loudly as we should. We make excuses. We look the other way. The message that sends can have a chilling effect on our young women.

And I've said before, when women succeed, America succeeds. Let me be clear, that's not just true in America. If you look internationally, countries that oppress their women are countries that do badly. Countries that empower their women are countries that thrive.

And so this is something that requires us to shift how we think about these issues. One letter from a young woman really brought this point home. Katherine Morrison, a young student from Youngstown, Ohio, she wrote: "How are we supposed to succeed when so many of our voices are being stifled? How can we succeed when our society says that as a woman, it's your fault if you are at a party or walked home alone. How can we succeed when people look at women and say, 'You should have known better,' or, 'Boys will be boys'?"

And Katherine is absolutely right. Women make up half this country, half its workforce, more than half of our college students. They are not going to succeed the way they should unless they are treated as true equals and are supported and respected. And unless women are allowed to fulfill their full potential, America will not reach its full potential. So we've got to change.

And this is not just the work of survivors, it's not just the work of activists. It's not just the work of college administrators. It's a responsibility of the soccer coach and the captain of the basketball team and the football players. And it's on fraternities and sororities, and it's on the editor of the school paper and the drum major in the band. And it's on the English department and the engineering department, and it's on the high schools and the elementary schools, and it's on teachers, and it's on counselors, and it's on mentors, and it's on ministers.

It's on celebrities and sports leagues and the media to set a better example. And it's on parents and grandparents and older brothers and sisters to sit down young people and talk about this issue.

And it's not just on the parents of young women to caution them. It is on the parents of young men to teach them respect for women. And it's on grown men to set an example and be clear about what it means to be a man.

It is on all of us to reject the quiet tolerance of sexual assault and to refuse to accept what's unacceptable. And we especially need our young men to show women the respect they deserve and to recognize sexual assault and to do their part to stop it. Because most young men on college campuses are not perpetrators. But the rest—we can't generalize across the board. But the rest of us can help stop those who think in these terms and shut stuff down. And that's not always easy to do with all the social pressures to stay quiet or go along; you don't want to be the guy who's stopping another friend from taking a woman home even if it looks like she doesn't or can't consent. Maybe you hear something in the locker room that makes you feel uncomfortable or see something at a party that you know isn't right, but

you're not sure whether you should stand up, not sure it's okay to intervene.

Here—and I think Joe said it well. The truth is, it's not just okay to intervene, it is your responsibility. It is your responsibility to speak your mind. It is your responsibility to tell your buddy when he's messing up. It is your responsibility to set the right tone when you're talking about women, even when women aren't around, maybe especially when they're not around. [*Laughter*]

And it's not just men who should intervene, women should also speak up when something doesn't look right, even if the men don't like it. It's all of us taking responsibility. Everybody has a role to play.

And in fact, we're here with Generation Progress to launch, appropriately enough, a campaign called "It's On Us." I mean, the idea is to fundamentally shift the way we think about sexual assault. So we're inviting colleges and universities to join us in saying, we are not tolerating this anymore: not on our campuses, not in our community, not in this country. And the campaign is building on the momentum that's already being generated by college campuses by the incredible young people around the country who have stepped up and are leading the way. I couldn't be prouder of them.

And we're also joined by some great partners in this effort, including the Office of Women's Health, the college sports community, media platforms. We've got universities who have signed up, including, by the way, our military academies, who are represented here today. So the goal is to hold ourselves and each other accountable and to look out for those who don't consent and can't consent. And anybody can be a part of this campaign.

So the first step on this is to go to ItsOnUs.org. That's ItsOnUs.org. Take a pledge to help keep women and men safe from sexual assault. It's a promise not to be a bystander to the problem, but to be part of the solution. I took the pledge. Joe took the pledge. You can take the pledge. You can share it on social media; you can encourage others to join us.

And this campaign is just part of a broader effort, but it's a critical part, because even as we continue to enforce our laws and work with colleges to improve their responses and to make sure that survivors are taken care of, it won't be enough unless we change the culture that allows assault to happen in the first place.

And I'm confident we can. I'm confident because of incredible young people like Lilly who speak out for change and empower other survivors. They inspire me to keep fighting. I'm assuming they inspire you as well. And this is a personal priority not just as a President, obviously, not just as a husband and a father of two extraordinary girls, but as an American who believes that our Nation's success depends on how we value and defend the rights of women and girls.

So I'm asking all of you, join us in this campaign. Commit to being part of the solution. Help make sure our schools are safe havens where everybody, men and women, can pursue their dreams and fulfill their potential.

Thank you so much for all the great work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:14 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lilly B. Jay, student, Amherst College, and her parents Molly Broughton Peter and Jeffrey A. Jay; White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett, in her capacity as Chair of the White House Council on Women and Girls; White House Adviser on Violence Against Women Lynn Rosenthal; and Katherine I. Morrison, student, Youngstown State University.

Remarks at the Democratic National Committee Women's Leadership Forum
September 19, 2014

Hello, everybody. Thank you! Thank you so much! All right, everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much. I am Barack, also known as Michelle's husband. [*Laughter*] It's good to see all of you. I see so many friends in the room and just incredible leaders from all across the country.

Speaking of leaders, I want to thank Debbie for the great work she is doing to keep our party strong. Nobody anywhere works harder than Debbie Wasserman Schultz. I want to thank her for her incredible efforts.

I also want to thank the CEO of the DNC, Amy Dacey. Give Amy a big round of applause. And to the cofounders of the Women's Leadership Forum, Cynthia Friedman and Carol Pensky. Where did they go? There they are.

Now, in addition to Debbie, you've heard some extraordinary leaders over the last few days. I already mentioned one, Michelle. [*Laughter*] Kirsten Gillibrand and Jill Biden and Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi. And apparently, only me and Joe are the guys that are speaking. That's okay; we're leaning in. [*Laughter*]

November 4 is 46 days away—46 days. And every day reminds us how much we have to fight for. Every day reminds us how much we have to protect. But over the last few months, world events have reminded us—all of us that some things in this world are bigger than politics.

We've seen that for all the challenges we've been through at home, America remains the one indispensable nation in the world. When the world is threatened, when the world needs help, the world looks to us, to America. Even the folks who badmouth us look to us. America is leading the effort to rally the world against Russian aggression. America is leading the fight to contain and combat an Ebola epidemic in Africa. America is leading the coalition that will degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL. And as Americans, we welcome these responsibilities, we don't shy away from them.

Our doctors, our volunteers, our diplomats, our servicemembers, they put themselves in harm's way. They don't represent Democrats or Republicans first, they represent America first. And for all the divisions and all the discord that's inherent in a democracy like ours—although, sometimes in this town, we get a little carried away with it—I continue to see the determination and resilience and fundamental goodness of the ordinary American every single day.

And that's why I'm more confident than ever about our country's future. Yes, we live in a time of enormous challenges. Thirteen years ago last week, this country was attacked. Six years ago this week sparked the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And yet, despite all these shocks, through all the pain, all the difficulty, all the challenges, for all the gritty, grueling work that was required for America to bounce back, America is positioned better today than at any time to seize the future. We're better positioned than any nation on Earth to help shape a better world for our kids and our grandkids.

And it's not just that we have, by far, the world's strongest and most capable military. It's that we've worked tirelessly to not only recover from crisis, but to rebuild a more durable economy. There are times when I'm watching the news and I'm wondering whether they've been paying attention. [*Laughter*]

Our businesses have created more than 10 million new jobs over the last 30—54 months. This is the longest uninterrupted stretch of private sector job growth in American history. Last year, the number of children living in poverty fell by 1.4 million. We've cut the deficit by more than half. We're producing clean energy at a rate we've never seen before. Our auto industry is selling more cars than any time since 2006. Our high school graduation rate, it is at a record high. More young people are earning college degrees than ever before. Millions more Americans have quality, affordable health insurance they can count on. Manufacturing is bouncing back.

By almost every economic measure, we are better off today than we were when I took office. And that's not an exaggeration, those are facts. And thanks to the resilience of working Americans and the leaders you helped elect and the policies that we put in place, this country we love has recovered faster and come farther than almost any other advanced nation on Earth. And for the first time in more than a decade, you ask business leaders worldwide where should you be investing your money, the world's number-one place to invest is not Chi-

na, it is the United States of America. And our lead is growing.

So there are enormous reasons to be optimistic about America. We've got the best cards. [*Laughter*] We've got the best hand. We've come so far. But the question on our minds today, 46 days before an election, is, where do we go from here? What does our future look like?

And in the coming weeks, the American people will see two very different visions of this country. One vision says that our economy grows best from the top down. If we tilt the Tax Code in favor of those at the very top, if we let the big banks and the polluters and the credit card companies do whatever they want, if we shrink investments in things like education and technology, if we make it harder for striving young immigrants to come here, then somehow, all that is going to add up to prosperity for everybody. It will all trickle down.

Another vision says that our economy grows best from the middle out; that if we give people a fair shot by investing in things like education; that if we ask people to pay their fair share so we can afford investments in basic science and research and infrastructure; if we ask big banks and credit card companies to play by the same rules to protect consumers and prevent another financial crisis; if we welcome striving, dreaming, young talent to our shores, then our businesses will grow and our middle class will thrive, and that will be good for everybody. That's a different vision.

And in case you didn't figure it out, the second vision is better. [*Laughter*] If you look at our history, that's the right vision. Whenever that's the direction that we move this country, everybody succeeds, everybody thrives. We don't succeed when we chase a top-down economic theory that says you're on your own. We do better when we embrace an economic patriotism that says we're all in this together.

And look, as Democrats, we don't agree on everything. But we share a vision of an America where opportunity is open to all who are willing to work for it. An America where we think beyond just the short term and we think about long-term investments in American energy and American infrastructure, American manufacturing, American innovation that unleashes new jobs and new industries. We think about an America where workers have the chance to earn new skills that lead directly to a good job. We dream of an America where our children have the chance to graduate from school fully prepared for the global competition that they're going to face. An America where hard work pays off with higher incomes for the middle class, for—with a minimum wage that actually is a wage you can live on, and yes, with affordable health insurance for everybody. That's the vision that we embrace, and it speaks to something my mother taught me, which is you can measure how well a country does by how well it treats its women.

It is remarkable that at a time when women are about half of our workforce, the primary breadwinners in more families than ever before, that some folks still talk about women's issues as if they're something separate over there, and economics is over here. That's nonsense. We do better when we field a full team. When women succeed, America succeeds. It's pretty straightforward. And just to continue the sports analogy—[*laughter*]—it wouldn't make much sense if you gave half the team really good equipment—[*laughter*]—and the other half was saddled with bad equipment. You wouldn't succeed if half your team operated by one set of rules and the other half operated with another set of rules.

Earlier today Joe Biden and I launched a new initiative called "It's On Us," to help confront the crisis of sexual assault on college campuses. And in addition to all the work that we're doing to enforce the law and lift up best practices, we want to also change the culture. And so corporations and citizens and colleges and universities and men as well as women have a responsibility to create a culture where women's basic human rights are protected and her talent and potential is given the value it deserves. That's part of our vision for how America succeeds.

And government has a responsibility there. Part of expanding opportunity for all is getting rid of policies that belong in the "Mad Men"

era. [*Laughter*] We need to update. It's 2014. A mom or a dad deserves a day off to care for a sick child or an aging parent without running into hardship. Women deserve equal pay for equal work. That should be pretty straightforward. All of us deserve workplaces where childcare and flexibility and decent wages aren't seen as a bonus, as a fringe benefit, but rather part of the basic social compact that we're in.

I talked about some of these issues at our first-ever Working Families Summit a few months ago. And before the summit started, some reporters asked me, isn't this sort of political? [*Laughter*] Family leave, childcare, fair pay, higher wages—isn't this sort of political? [*Laughter*] Well, I'm—[*laughter*]—and I said, well, it's not political in the sense that it's not relevant. It's not political in the sense that it's just spin. It's not political in the sense that it's just catering to a quote, unquote, "special interest."

We're talking about half the population. [*Laughter*] We're talking about families that depend on that half of the population. This is about getting the most out of our Nation's talent. It's about preparing our kids for the global economic competition that they'll face and rebuilding a middle class that hasn't seen a real raise in 15 years. It's about fulfilling the basic idea: here in America, you can make it if you try.

So it's not politics in the narrow, cramped sense, but yes, it's politics in the big sense of us organizing ourselves to try to move our country forward. The work we do is bigger than partisan politics. And I believe that for all that is wrong with our politics right now, there's so much that's right with America that if we could just create a government and a politics that spoke to common sense and what was important for ordinary Americans, we'd do great.

And I see it in individual Americans everywhere I go. And when I think about America, I think about the doctor who returns from the front lines of a deadly outbreak and then volunteers to go right back. Or the pilot flying over a distant land, risking everything in order to keep us safe and free. Or the military spouse who doesn't wear the uniform, never asks for credit, but who serves our country every day. America isn't the party we belong to. We're not born Democrats or Republicans. America is the values we share: hard work and responsibility and sacrifice and looking out for one another.

And so there is one brand of politics that we've gotten accustomed to, which is mean and nasty and polarizing, but there's another sense of politics in terms of civic participation and us having a common vision for the future and being willing to work for it and recognizing that there are things that are bigger than each of us.

Don't let anybody tell you that working and organizing and voting for the values that built this country isn't worth it. It is worth it. Because despite the cynics—and boy, we sure have a lot of them; sometimes, I think Washington is the capital of cynicism—but despite those cynics, America is making progress. Despite unyielding opposition, there are workers with jobs who didn't have them before. There are families with health insurance who didn't have it before. There are students in college who couldn't afford it before. There are troops who served tour after tour who are home now with their families.

And I know cynicism is fashionable these days. But cynicism did not put an astronaut on the Moon, did not win a war, has never cured a disease, didn't start a business, did not feed a young mind, was not responsible for making sure that workers had rights and women had rights and civil rights were enforced in this country. That wasn't produced by cynicism. Cynicism is a choice. Hope is a better choice.

And so today I'm asking the same thing I asked in 2008. I'm asking you to choose hope. Hope is what gave soldiers courage to storm a beach. Hope is what gave young people the strength to march for women's rights and worker's rights and civil rights and voting rights and gay rights and immigrant rights. Hope is the better choice, the belief that there are better days. And if we work together and organize

together and vote together, then we can build up our middle class and hand down something better to our kids.

Hope is what built America. I've never been more confident that America's best days are still ahead, but we've got to work for it, and we've got to have faith in it. And you know what gives me faith is, we've got a whole bunch of strong women who are ready to work for it and have faith.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:43 p.m. at the Marriott Marquis Washington, DC, hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden; and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Statement on the Results of the Scottish Independence Referendum
September 19, 2014

We welcome the result of yesterday's referendum on Scottish independence and congratulate the people of Scotland for their full and energetic exercise of democracy. Through debate, discussion, and passionate yet peaceful deliberations, they reminded the world of Scotland's enormous contributions to the U.K. and the world and have spoken in favor of keeping Scotland within the United Kingdom. We have no closer ally than the United Kingdom, and we look forward to continuing our strong and special relationship with all the people of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as we address the challenges facing the world today.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Designating Funds for Overseas Contingency Operations and Global Counterterrorism
September 19, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 114(c) of the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2015 (CR), I hereby designate for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding (including the rescission of funds) and contributions from foreign governments so designated by the Congress in sections 114(a) and 149(g) of the CR, respectively, pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

The President's Weekly Address
September 20, 2014

Over the past week, the United States has continued to lead our friends and allies in the strategy to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL. As I've said before, our intelligence community has not yet detected specific plots from these terrorists against America. Right now they pose a threat to the people of Iraq, Syria, and the broader

Middle East. But its leaders have threatened America and our allies. And if left unchecked, they could pose a growing threat to the United States.

So, last month, I gave the order for our military to begin taking targeted action against ISIL. Since then, American pilots have flown more than 170 airstrikes against these terrorists in Iraq. And France has now joined us in these airstrikes.

And going forward, we won't hesitate to take action against these terrorists in Iraq or in Syria. But this is not America's fight alone. I won't commit our troops to fighting another ground war in Iraq or in Syria. It's more effective to use our capabilities to help partners on the ground secure their own countries' futures. We will use our air power. We will train and equip our partners. We will advise, and we will assist. And we'll lead a broad coalition of nations who have a stake in this fight. This isn't America versus ISIL, this is the people of that region versus ISIL. It's the world versus ISIL.

We've been working to secure bipartisan support for this strategy here at home, because I believe that we are strongest as a nation when the President and Congress work together. We've been consulting closely with Congress. And last week, Secretary of State Kerry, Secretary of Defense Hagel, and military leaders worked to gain their support for our strategy.

A majority of Democrats and a majority of Republicans in both the House and the Senate have now approved a first, key part of our strategy by wide margins. They've given our troops the authority they need to train Syrian opposition fighters so that they can fight ISIL in Syria. Those votes sent a powerful signal to the world: Americans are united in confronting this danger. And I hope Congress continues to make sure our troops get what they need to get the job done.

Meanwhile, because we're leading the right way, more nations are joining our coalition. Over 40 countries have offered to help the broad campaign against ISIL so far, from training and equipment to humanitarian relief, to flying combat missions. And this week, at the United Nations, I'll continue to rally the world against this threat.

This is an effort that America has the unique ability to lead. When the world is threatened, when the world needs help, it calls on America. And we call on our troops. Whether it's to degrade and ultimately destroy a group of terrorists or to contain and combat a threat like the Ebola epidemic in Africa, we ask a lot of our troops. But while our politics may be divided at times, the American people stand united around supporting our troops and their families. This is a moment of American leadership. And thanks to them, it is a moment that we will meet.

Thanks.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:05 p.m. on September 19 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on September 20. In the address, the President referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. H.J. Res. 124, Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2015, was approved September 19 and assigned Public Law No. 113–164. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 19, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 20.

Remarks on Signing the Presidents' Declaration To Fulfill the Promise of America and an Exchange With Reporters
September 22, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. All right, don't knock anything over. [*Laughter*] It's always a little hazardous.

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome the leadership and some of the key participants in America's Promise. I think as many of you know, this is something that the Powell family and others helped to initiate and a number of Presidents have participated in.

The concept is simple: that our greatest asset are our children. And it is absolutely critical for us as a nation to continually find ways in

which we can make sure that they are safe, that they are getting the kind of education they need to succeed in the 21st century, that they're healthy, that they are on the track not only to be successful, but also to be good citizens. And the companies and organizations and non-for-profits that are represented by—behind me, under Alma's leadership, have contributed in so many ways, but this is just a small sampling of the hundreds of organizations around the country that are doing great work every single day and are learning from each other and creating a network of concern and nurturing for our children in every walk of life.

And so I'm very proud to be the latest President to sign on to America's Promise. It is consistent with a number of the initiatives that we've been putting forward in the administration, whether it's through our efforts in Race to the Top and the Department of Education, more recently, the work that we're trying to do around "My Brother's Keeper" and making sure that every young person in America gets a chance at success.

And so, in addition to the symbolic act of signing on to this declaration, this also gives us an opportunity to collaborate and learn more about some of the great work that's being done out there and figuring out how Government, private sector, and nonprofits can all work together to achieve the same goal.

So thank you very much for your outstanding work, all of you. And I will now——

Former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. ——affix my name to this.

[*At this point, the President signed the declaration.*]

The President. There you go.

Thank you, guys.

[*Several reporters began speaking at once.*]

U.S. Secret Service

Q. Do you still have confidence in the Secret Service?

The President. The Secret Service does a great job, and I'm grateful for the sacrifices that they make on my behalf and my family's behalf.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Alma J. Powell, chair of the board of directors, America's Promise Alliance.

Statement on Corporate Inversions
September 22, 2014

America's businesses have created 10 million jobs over the last 54 months, the longest stretch of uninterrupted private sector job growth in our Nation's history, and we should do everything we can as a country to build on that progress. That's why I've called on Congress to lower our corporate tax rate, close wasteful loopholes, and simplify the Tax Code for everyone.

While there's no substitute for Congressional action, my administration will act wherever we can to protect the progress the American people have worked so hard to bring about. As part of this effort, Secretary Lew briefed me today on the first steps the Treasury Department is taking to discourage companies from taking advantage of corporate inversions: moving their tax residence overseas on paper to avoid paying their fair share in taxes here at home. We've recently seen a few large corporations announce plans to exploit this loophole, undercutting businesses that act responsibly and leaving the middle class to pay the bill, and I'm glad that Secretary Lew is exploring additional actions to help reverse this trend.

I believe America does better when hard work pays off, responsibility is rewarded, and everyone plays by the same set of rules. In the

weeks and months ahead, we should do even more to bring fairness to our Tax Code, help our businesses create more American jobs, and expand opportunity for all.

Remarks on the Situation in Syria
September 23, 2014

Good morning, everybody. Last night, on my orders, America's Armed Forces began strikes against ISIL targets in Syria. Today the American people give thanks for the extraordinary service of our men and women in uniform, including the pilots who flew these missions with the courage and professionalism that we've come to expect from the finest military that the world's ever known.

Earlier this month, I outlined for the American people our strategy to confront the threat posed by the terrorist group known as ISIL. I made clear that as part of this campaign, the United States would take action against targets in both Iraq and Syria so that these terrorists can't find safe haven anywhere. I also made clear that America would act as part of a broad coalition. And that's exactly what we've done.

We were joined in this action by our friends and partners: Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain, and Qatar. America is proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with these nations on behalf of our common security.

The strength of this coalition makes it clear to the world that this is not America's fight alone. Above all, the people and governments in the Middle East are rejecting ISIL and standing up for the peace and security that the people of the region and the world deserve.

Meanwhile, we will move forward with our plan supported by bipartisan majorities in Congress, to ramp up our effort to train and equip the Syrian opposition, who are the best counterweight to ISIL and the Asad regime. And more broadly, over 40 nations have offered to help in this comprehensive effort to confront this terrorist threat: to take out terrorist targets, to train and equip Iraqi and Syrian opposition fighters who are going up against ISIL on the ground, to cut off ISIL's financing, to counter its hateful ideology, and to stop the flow of fighters into and out of the region.

Last night we also took strikes to disrupt plotting against the United States and our allies by seasoned Al Qaida operatives in Syria who are known as the Khorasan Group. And once again, it must be clear to anyone who would plot against America and try to do Americans harm that we will not tolerate safe havens for terrorists who threaten our people.

I've spoken to leaders in Congress, and I'm pleased that there is bipartisan support for the actions that we are taking. America is always stronger when we stand united, and that unity sends a powerful message to the world that we will do what's necessary to defend our country.

Over the next several days, I will have the opportunity to meet with Prime Minister Abadi of Iraq and with friends and allies at the United Nations to continue to building support for the coalition that is confronting this serious threat to our peace and security. The overall effort will take time. There will be challenges ahead. But we're going to do what's necessary to take the fight to this terrorist group, for the security of the country and the region and for the entire world.

Thanks. God bless our troops. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at the United Nations Climate Change Summit in New York City
September 23, 2014

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, fellow leaders: For all the immediate challenges that we gather to address this week—terrorism, instability, inequality, disease—there's

one issue that will define the contours of this century more dramatically than any other, and that is the urgent and growing threat of a changing climate.

Five years have passed since many of us met in Copenhagen. And since then, our understanding of climate change has advanced, both in the deepening science that says this once-distant threat has moved "firmly into the present" and into the sting of more frequent extreme weather events that show us exactly what these changes may mean for future generations.

No nation is immune. In America, the past decade has been our hottest on record. Along our eastern coast, the city of Miami now floods at high tide. In our West, wildfire season now stretches most of the year. In our heartland, farms have been parched by the worst drought in generations and drenched by the wettest spring in our history. A hurricane left parts of this great city dark and underwater. And some nations already live with far worse. Worldwide, this summer was the hottest ever recorded, with global carbon emissions still on the rise.

So the climate is changing faster than our efforts to address it. The alarm bells keep ringing. Our citizens keep marching. We cannot pretend we do not hear them. We have to answer the call. We know what we have to do to avoid irreparable harm. We have to cut carbon pollution in our own countries to prevent the worst effects of climate change. We have to adapt to the impacts that, unfortunately, we can no longer avoid. And we have to work together as a global community to tackle this global threat before it is too late.

We cannot condemn our children, and their children, to a future that is beyond their capacity to repair. Not when we have the means—the technological innovation and the scientific imagination—to begin the work of repairing it right now.

As one of America's Governors has said, "We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it." So today I am here personally, as the leader of the world's largest economy and its second largest emitter, to say that we have begun to do something about it.

The United States has made ambitious investments in clean energy and ambitious reductions in our carbon emissions. We now harness 3 times as much electricity from the wind and 10 times as much from the sun as we did when I came into office. Within a decade, our cars will go twice as far on a gallon of gas, and already, every major automaker offers electric vehicles. We've made unprecedented investments to cut energy waste in our homes and our buildings and our appliances, all of which will save consumers billions of dollars. And we are committed to helping communities build climate-resilient infrastructure.

So, all told, these advances have helped create jobs, grow our economy, and drive our carbon pollution to its lowest levels in nearly two decades, proving that there does not have to be a conflict between a sound environment and strong economic growth.

Over the past 8 years, the United States has reduced our total carbon pollution by more than any other nation on Earth. But we have to do more. Last year, I issued America's first Climate Action Plan to double down on our efforts. Under that plan, my administration is working with states and utilities to set first-ever standards to cut the amount of carbon pollution our power plants can dump into the air. And when completed, this will mark the single most important and significant step the United States has ever taken to reduce our carbon emissions.

Last week alone, we announced an array of new actions in renewable energy and energy efficiency that will save consumers more than $10 billion on their energy bills and cut carbon pollution by nearly 300 million metric tons through 2030. That's the equivalent of taking more than 60 million cars off the road for one year.

I also convened a group of private sector leaders who have agreed to do their part to slash consumption of dangerous greenhouse gases known as HFCs: slash them 80 percent by 2050. And already, more than a hundred nations have agreed to launch talks to phase

down HFCs under the Montreal Protocol, the same agreement the world used successfully to phase out ozone-depleting chemicals.

And this is something that President Xi of China and I have worked on together. Just a few minutes ago, I met with Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli and reiterated my belief that as the two largest economies and emitters in the world, we have a special responsibility to lead. That's what big nations have to do.

And today I call on all countries to join us, not next year or the year after that, but right now, because no nation can meet this global threat alone. The United States has engaged more allies and partners to cut carbon pollution and prepare for the impacts we cannot avoid. All told, American climate assistance now reaches more than 120 nations around the world. We're helping more nations skip past the dirty phase of development, using current technologies, not duplicating the same mistakes and environmental degradation that took place previously.

We're partnering with African entrepreneurs to launch clean energy projects. We're helping farmers practice climate-smart agriculture and plant more durable crops. We're building international coalitions to drive action, from reducing methane emissions from pipelines to launching a free trade agreement for environmental goods. And we have been working shoulder to shoulder with many of you to make the Green Climate Fund a reality.

But let me be honest. None of this is without controversy. In each of our countries, there are interests that will be resistant to action. And in each country, there is a suspicion that if we act and other countries don't, that we will be at an economic disadvantage. But we have to lead. That is what the United Nations and this General Assembly is about.

Now, the truth is, is that no matter what we do, some populations will still be at risk. The nations that contribute the least to climate change often stand to lose the most. And that's why, since I took office, the United States has expanded our direct adaptation assistance eightfold, and we're going to do more.

Today I'm directing our Federal agencies to begin factoring climate resilience into our international development programs and investments. And I'm announcing a new effort to deploy the unique scientific and technological capabilities of the United States, from climate data to early-warning systems. So this effort includes a new partnership that will draw on the resources and expertise of our leading private sector companies and philanthropies to help vulnerable nations better prepare for weather-related disasters and better plan for long-term threats like steadily rising seas.

Yes, this is hard. But there should be no question that the United States of America is stepping up to the plate. We recognize our role in creating this problem; we embrace our responsibility to combat it. We will do our part, and we will help developing nations do theirs. But we can only succeed in combating climate change if we are joined in this effort by every nation, developed and developing alike. Nobody gets a pass.

The emerging economies that have experienced some of the most dynamic growth in recent years have also emitted rising levels of carbon pollution. It is those emerging economies that are likely to produce more and more carbon emissions in the years to come. So nobody can stand on the sidelines on this issue. We have to set aside the old divides. We have to raise our collective ambition, each of us doing what we can to confront this global challenge.

This time, we need an agreement that reflects economic realities in the next decade and beyond. It must be ambitious, because that's what the scale of this challenge demands. It must be inclusive, because every country must play its part. And yes, it must be flexible, because different nations have different circumstances.

Five years ago, I pledged America would reduce our carbon emissions in the range of 17 percent below 2005 levels by the year 2020. America will meet that target. And by early next year, we will put forward our next emission target, reflecting our confidence in the

ability of our technological entrepreneurs and scientific innovators to lead the way.

So today I call on all major economies to do the same. For I believe, in the words of Dr. King, that there is such a thing as being too late. And for the sake of future generations, our generation must move toward a global compact to confront a changing climate while we still can.

This challenge demands our ambition. Our children deserve such ambition. And if we act now, if we can look beyond the swarm of current events and some of the economic challenges and political challenges involved, if we place the air that our children will breathe and the food that they will eat and the hopes and dreams of all posterity above our own short-term interests, we may not be too late for them.

While you and I may not live to see all the fruits of our labor, we can act to see that the century ahead is marked not by conflict, but by cooperation; not by human suffering, but by human progress; and that the world we leave to our children, and our children's children, will be cleaner and healthier, and more prosperous and secure.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:03 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to President of the U.N. General Assembly Sam Kahamba Kutesa. He also referred to Executive Order 13677, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting in New York City
September 23, 2014

Good afternoon, all of you. I was just discussing with President Clinton that if Chelsea begins delivery while I'm speaking, she has my motorcade and will be able to navigate traffic. [*Laughter*] Because actually, it's pretty smooth for me during the week. I don't know what the problem is. Everybody hypes the traffic, but I haven't noticed. [*Laughter*]

Always wonderful to follow Matt Damon. [*Laughter*] I saw people trickling out after he was done. [*Laughter*] These are the hardcore policy people who decided to stay for me. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank President Clinton for your friendship and your leadership and bringing us together as only he can. Bill first asked me to come to CGI when I was a Senator, and as President, I've been proud to come back every year. As President, Bill asked Americans to serve their country, and we recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of AmeriCorps on the South Lawn. And Bill asked all of you to make commitments to better our world. And together, you've touched the lives of hundreds of millions of people. And it's a testimony, I think, to any leader, not just for what they themselves do, but the degree to which they're able to inspire action from others. And by that measure, obviously, Bill Clinton has continued to exert extraordinary global leadership for decades and I suspect for decades more to come. So—[*applause*].

Now, in agreeing to come, I had an ask as well. I think one of the best decisions I ever made as President was to ask Hillary Clinton to serve as our Nation's Secretary of State. She just welcomed me backstage. I'll always be grateful for her extraordinary leadership representing our Nation around the world. And I still have a lot of debt to pay, though, because the two of them were separated far too often. Hillary put in a lot of miles during her tenure as Secretary of State. She looks—she has the postadministration glow right now. [*Laughter*] She looks much more rested. [*Laughter*]

So it's wonderful to be back at GCI. I cannot imagine a more fitting audience with whom to discuss the work that brings me here today, and that is our obligation as free peoples, as free nations, to stand with the courageous citizens and brave civil society groups who are working for equality and opportunity and justice and human dignity all over the world.

And I'm especially pleased that we're joined today by our many partners in this work: governments, civil society groups, including faith leaders, and men and women from around the world who devote their lives and, at times, risk their lives to lifting up their communities and strengthening their nations and claiming universal rights on behalf of their fellow citizens. And we're honored by the presence of these individuals.

As we do every time this year, Presidents and Prime Ministers converge on this great city to advance important work. But as leaders, we are not the most important people here today. It is the civil society leaders who, in many ways, are going to have the more lasting impact, because as the saying goes, the most important title is not President or Prime Minister; the most important title is citizen.

It is citizens—ordinary men and women, determined to forge their own future—who throughout history have sparked all the great change and progress. It was citizens here in America who worked to abolish slavery, who marched for women's rights and workers' rights and civil rights. They are the reason I can stand here today as President of the United States. It's citizens who right now are standing up for the freedom that is their God-given right.

And I've seen it myself, in the advocates and activists that I've met all over the world. I've seen it in the courage of Berta Soler, the leader of Cuba's Ladies in White who endure harassment and arrest in order to win freedom for their loved ones and for the Cuban people. I've seen it in the determination of Russians in Moscow and St. Petersburg who speak up for rule of law and human rights. I've seen it the passion of advocates in Senegal who nurture their democracy and young Africans across the continent who are helping to marshal in Africa's rise. I've seen it the hope of young Palestinians in Ramallah who dream of building their future in a free and independent state. I see it in the perseverance of men and women in Burma who are striving to build a democracy against the odds.

These citizens remind us why civil society is so essential. When people are free to speak their minds and hold their leaders accountable, governments are more responsive and more effective. When entrepreneurs are free to create and develop new ideas, then economies are more innovative and attract more trade and investment and ultimately become more prosperous.

When communities, including minorities, are free to live and pray and love as they choose; when nations uphold the rights of all their people, including, perhaps especially, women and girls, then those countries are more likely to thrive. If you want strong, successful countries, you need strong, vibrant civil societies. When citizens are free to organize and work together across borders to make our communities healthier, our environment cleaner, and our world safer, that's when real change comes.

And we see this in—this spirit in the new commitments you're making here at CGI to help the people of West Africa in their fight against Ebola.

We've also seen this spirit in another cause, the global campaign against antipersonnel landmines. Tireless advocates like Jody Williams fought for the Ottawa Convention; leaders like Patrick Leahy have led the charge in Washington. Twenty years ago, President Clinton stood at the United Nations and pledged that the United States would work toward the elimination of these landmines, and earlier today we announced that we will take another important step. Outside of the unique circumstances of the Korean Peninsula, where we have a longstanding commitment to the defense of our ally South Korea, the United States will not use antipersonnel landmines.

So we will begin destroying our stockpiles not required for the defense of South Korea. And we're going to continue to work to find ways that would allow us to ultimately comply fully and accede to the Ottawa Convention. And the United States will continue to lead as the world's largest donor of global demining efforts, freeing communities and countries from these weapons.

But the point is, this started in civil society. That's what prompted action by President Clinton and by myself. And promoting civil society that can surface issues and push leadership is not just in keeping with our values, it's not charity. It's in our national interests. Countries that respect human rights, including freedom of association, happen to be our closest partners. That is not an accident. Conversely, when these rights are suppressed, it fuels grievances and a sense of injustice that over time can fuel instability or extremism. So I believe America's support for civil society is a matter of national security.

It is precisely because citizens and civil society can be so powerful, their ability to harness technology and connect and mobilize at this moment so unprecedented, that more and more governments are doing everything in their power to silence them.

From Russia to China to Venezuela, you are seeing relentless crackdowns, vilifying legitimate dissent as subversive. In places like Azerbaijan, laws make it incredibly difficult for NGOs even to operate. From Hungary to Egypt, endless regulations and overt intimidation increasingly target civil society. And around the world, brave men and women who dare raise their voices are harassed and attacked and even killed.

So today we honor those who have given their lives. Among them, in Cameroon, Eric Lembembe; in Libya, Salwa Bugaighis; in Cambodia, Chut Wutty; in Russia, Natalia Estemirova. We stand in solidarity with those who are detained at this very moment: in Venezuela, Leopoldo Lopez; in Burundi, Pierre Claver Mbonimpa; in Egypt, Ahmed Maher; in China, Liu Xiaobo and now Ilham Tohti; in Vietnam, Father Ly; and so many others. They deserve to be free. They ought to be released.

This growing crackdown on civil society is a campaign to undermine the very idea of democracy. And what's needed is an even stronger campaign to defend democracy.

Since I took office, the United States has continued to lead the way, and as Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton helped champion our efforts. Across the globe, no country does more to strengthen civil society than America. And 1 year ago, here in New York, I pledged that the United States would do even more, and I challenged the world to join us in this cause. Working with many of you, that's what we've done. And today I'm proud to announce a series of new steps.

First, partnering and protecting civil society groups around the world is now a mission across the U.S. Government. So, under a new Presidential memorandum that I'm issuing today, Federal departments and agencies will consult and partner more regularly with civil society groups. They will oppose attempts by foreign governments to dictate the nature of our assistance to civil society. And they will oppose efforts by foreign governments to restrict freedoms of peaceful assembly and association and expression. So this is not just a matter of the State Department or USAID, it's across the Government. This is part of American leadership.

Second, we're creating new innovation centers to empower civil society groups around the world. I want to thank our partners in this effort, including the Government of Sweden and the Aga Khan Development Network. Starting next year, civil society groups will be able to use these centers to network and access knowledge and technology and funding that they need to put their ideas into action. And we'll start with six centers in Latin America, in sub-Saharan Africa, in the Middle East, and in Asia. Oppressive governments are sharing "worst practices" to weaken civil society. We're going to help you share the "best practices" to stay strong and vibrant.

Number three, we're expanding our support and funding for the Community of Democracies to better coordinate the diplomacy and pressure that we bring to bear. And this means more support for those who are fighting against the laws that restrict civil society. In recent years, we've worked together to prevent new limits on civil society from Kenya to Cambodia. And we've helped expand the space for civil society in countries from Honduras to Tunisia to Burma. And standing together, we can do even more.

And finally, we're increasing our support to society groups across the board. We're going to increase our emergency assistance to embattled NGOs. We'll do more to match groups with the donors and funding that they need. And in the coming months, our Treasury Department will finalize regulations so it's even easier and less costly for your foundations to make grants overseas.

We'll increase our legal assistance and technical support to those pushing back against onerous laws and regulations. And through our Open Government Partnership, we'll help more governments truly partner with civil society. We'll continue to stand up for a free and open Internet so individuals can access information and make up their own minds about the issues that their countries confront.

And through our programs to engage young leaders around the world, we're helping to build the next generation of civil society leaders. And our message to those young people is simple: America stands with you.

We stand with educators like Walid Ali of Kenya. Where's Walid? *Habari?* I just had a chance to meet him. There he is. In his village near the border of Somalia, young people without jobs are tempted by drugs. They're recruited by terrorists. So Walid offers them counseling and business classes and small plots of farmland, helping them rebuild their own lives and their communities and giving them options for the future. He strives, he says, not just for the idea of democracy, but to "cement the practice of democracy." So we thank you, Walid, for your extraordinary efforts, and we stand with you.

We stand with humanitarians like Miriam Canales. Where is Miriam? There she is right there. In communities that are wracked at times by horrific violence, children are so terrified to walk the streets that many begin that dangerous and often deadly march north. And Miriam's outreach centers give them a safe place to play and grow and learn. And she says her dream is "that people in Honduras can walk free" and that young people will have "opportunities in their own country." And we couldn't be prouder of you, Miriam, and we stand with you.

We stand with activists like Sopheap Chak of Cambodia. Where's—there she is, Sopheap. Sopheap saw a fellow human rights advocate hauled off by the police, and she could have fled too, but she says she's never thought of leaving Cambodia even for minute. So she keeps organizing and marching and mobilizing youth to demand justice. And she says, "I dream that Cambodian citizens can enjoy the freedoms that they are entitled to." We could not be prouder of you, and we stand with you.

And we stand with advocates like John Gad of Egypt. Where's John? Like all Egyptians, John has lived through the turmoil of recent years. As an artist, he uses his poetry and performances to help people "discover the power inside them," which is as good a description of being an organizer as anything—[*laughter*]—and being a leader. And he's been working to help women and girls recover from violence and sexual assault. He's focused, he says, on "how to teach Egyptians to accept each other." And he has said that "we have rights that we can achieve in a peaceful way." John is the future. That's why we stand with him.

Now, these individuals are just a small sample, they're just an example of the extraordinary drive and courage and commitment of people that oftentimes are outside of the headlines. People don't do stories on them. When they're endangered or harassed, it usually doesn't surface in the news. But they are those who are pushing the boulder up the hill to make sure that the world is a little bit of a better place.

And we live in a complicated world. We've got imperfect choices. The reality is sometimes, for instance, for the sake of our national security, the United States works with governments that do not fully respect the universal rights of their citizens. These are choices that I, as President, constantly have to make. And I will never apologize for doing everything in my power to protect the safety and security of the American people. That is my first and primary job. But that does not mean that human rights

can be simply sacrificed for the sake of expediency.

So, although it is uncomfortable, although it sometimes causes friction, the United States will not stop speaking out for the human rights of all people and pushing governments to uphold those rights and freedoms. We will not stop doing that, because that's part of who we are, and that's part of what we stand for.

And when governments engage in tactics against citizens and civil society, hoping nobody will notice, it is our job to shine a spotlight on that abuse. And when individuals like the ones I introduced are being held down, it's our job to help lift them back up. When they try to wall you off from the world, we want to connect you with each other. When your governments may try to pass oppressive laws, we'll try to oppose them. When they try to cut off your funding, we're going to try to give you a lifeline. And when they try to silence you, we want to amplify your voice.

And if, amid all the restrictions and all the pressure and all the harassment and all the fear, if they try to tell you that the world does not care and that your friends have forsaken you, do not ever believe it. Because you are not alone. You are never alone. Your fellow advocates stand with you, and your communities stand with you. Your friends around the world stand with you. The United States of America stands with you, and its President stands with you.

No matter how dark the hour, we remember those words of Dr. King: "The time is always ripe to do the right thing." And Dr. King also said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." The reason we support civil society is because we have seen in this country of ours that it does, in fact, bend towards justice. But it does not do so on its own. It does so because there are hands of ordinary people doing extraordinary things every single day, and they pull that arc in the direction of justice.

That's why we have freedom in this country. That's why I'm able to stand before you here today. And that's why we will stand with them tomorrow.

God bless you all. God bless all those who are working under tough conditions in every corner of the world. Thank you, CGI. Thank you, President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m. at the Sheraton New York Times Square Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Chelsea Clinton, daughter of former President William J. Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; actor Matthew P. Damon; Jody Williams, chair, Nobel Women's Initiative; Leopoldo Lopez, national coordinator, Venezuela's Popular Will opposition party; Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, president, Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Detained Persons; Ahmed Maher, cofounder, April 6 Youth Movement; Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo; Ilham Tohti, professor, Minzu University in Beijing, who was jailed for political activism on behalf of the Uighur minority in China; Thadeus Nguyen Van Ly, a Catholic priest jailed for political activism in Vietnam; Walid Ahmed Ali, founder, Lamu Youth Alliance; Miriam Canales, coordinator, North Office Alianza Joven Honduras; and Sopheap Chak, executive director, and Kem Sokha, former president, Cambodian Center for Human Rights. The related memorandum on deepening U.S. Government efforts to collaborate with and strengthen civil society overseas is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks During a Meeting With Representatives of Arab States Participating in Military Operations Against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization in New York City
September 23, 2014

Well, it is a wonderful opportunity for me to welcome these leaders—friends, partners from the region—and to say thank you to all of them for their participation and commitment to rolling back the violent extremism that has so disrupted Iraq and Syria and threatens the region as a whole.

And in addition to His Majesty King Abdullah, I want to give a special welcome to Prime Minister Abadi and say congratulations to him for his leadership. To our friends from Saudi Arabia, from Bahrain and Qatar, we want to thank you very much for everything that you have done, and the United Emirate—Arab Emirates as well.

This represents partners and friends in which we have worked for very many years to make sure that security and prosperity exists in this region. And what we've all seen is that, with the emergence of ISIL, so much progress is threatened and so many people's lives are threatened. And because of the almost unprecedented effort of this coalition, I think we now have an opportunity to send a very clear message that the world is united, that all of us are committed to making sure that we degrade and ultimately destroy not only ISIL, but also the kinds of extremist ideologies that would lead to so much bloodshed.

This is not going to be something that is quick, and it is not something that is going to be easy. It will take time. And it's not only a military effort. I think what we all understand here is that young people have to have opportunity. We have to make sure that we're providing the education that's necessary for young people to succeed in a modern economy, that we all have to promote religious tolerance. And it is going to be also important to provide opportunities for entrepreneurship and economic growth in these communities.

These are all issues in which the United States has worked and will continue to work with these countries. And—but we also recognize that right now we have a very severe and significant threat. What we've seen from the world community is a recognition of that threat. And we are very appreciative of our partnership with all the countries here.

We are committed to a sovereign Iraq that is able to maintain its territorial integrity and provide for its own security. We are committed to a Syria that is at peace and is not having the sorts of spillover effects that are burdening its neighbors. We're committed to making sure that millions of people can return to their homes and that they can live in peace and security. And we are committed to making sure that we put an end to the kind of sectarian strife that has been so prevalent for these last several years and has harmed so many people.

So again, I just want to say thank you to all of you. This is obviously not the end of an effort, but is rather a beginning. But I'm confident with the kind of partnership that is represented here, that we'll be able to be successful.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:07 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria New York hotel. In his remarks, he referred to King Abdullah II of Jordan; and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in New York City
September 23, 2014

First of all, I just want to thank Lise and Mark not just for tonight, but they have been just incredible friends for a really, really long time, and they have been there when we were

up, and they have been there when we were down and everywhere in between and have never asked for anything other than just that I do the right thing. And those are the kinds of friends that you remember and the ones that last. And so I just want to say thank you to both of you and their beautiful daughters who, unfortunately, remind me that mine are on their way to college soon. [*Laughter*] They grow up too fast.

I've got a lot of friends in the room, people I've known for a long time and then some folks who I'm meeting for the first time. I want to spend as much time as possible answering questions and taking comments. There are two other people I want to acknowledge, because this is the reason we're here. My name is not on the ballot in November, but there are a couple of people who do extraordinary work every single day in the United States Senate. I had the pleasure of serving with them, and one of them is your own senior Senator from the great State of New York, Chuck Schumer.

You may not have heard of Chuck because he doesn't really do a lot of media—[*laughter*]—but he is tireless and incredibly effective. And one of the best young public servants that we have in our country, who has the thankless job of being the head of the DSCC, the Senator from the great State of Colorado, Michael Bennet.

First of all, I apologize for the traffic. Not much I can do about it. The blame is spread between me and another 160-or-so world leaders who converge upon New York every single year. Yet unlike some of the previous U.N. General Assembly meetings, this one really counts. As Mark alluded, we've gone through extraordinary challenges over the last decade, and when I came into office, the world economy was in a free fall, something we hadn't seen since the Great Depression. And we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. We were still in the midst of two wars. Challenges like climate change weren't being addressed.

And over the last 6 years, by every economic measure, we are better off: unemployment down, deficit cut by more than half, energy production booming, clean energy doubled, our financial system much more stable than it was before, the stock market obviously doing pretty good, which means that not only New York does well, but 401(k)s across the country have been replenished. An auto industry has been saved; the housing industry has steadily improved. High school graduation rates are up; college attendance rates are up. Millions of people have health care that didn't have it before. And by the way, despite the predictions from the naysayers, it turns out that we've actually slowed the growth of health care costs in this country in an almost unprecedented fashion, which it's estimated saving us about $800 billion so far, despite improvements in quality.

Despite that, I think there's some anxiety across the country, and the question is, why? And I offer three reasons. The first, which is most prominent in the news right now, is that there is great disorder in the world. It's not unprecedented. In many ways, it doesn't pose some of the same existential threats that we experienced during the Great Wars or during the cold war, but the instability that we see in the Middle East, the Russian aggression towards Ukraine, the breakdown in public health systems—or what public health systems ever existed in a place like Liberia—in the face of the Ebola crisis, and the emergence of a terrorist threat in ISIL that threatens to destabilize an entire region, all those things are justifiably making people wonder whether the center will hold.

And the good news is, this week what you're seeing is what American leadership means. I just came from a meeting in which we were actually able to get Arab countries, many of which have historically been on opposite sides of issues and sectarian conflict in the region, all united around fighting ISIL and eradicating the ideology, the extreme fanaticism that underlies what's happening in ISIL.

With respect to Ebola, we have made an unprecedented investment, and as a consequence of our actions, we have a good chance of saving as many as a million lives and making sure that there's not the kind of spillover that could end up being an epidemic in our country and affect our loved ones.

Climate change: We're going to be taking the lead and, in fact, potentially engaging with China in making sure that we move boldly and aggressively in confronting that significant threat. We've unified the world in isolating Russia and supporting not just the Ukrainian people, but the core principle that was part of the foundation of the United Nations, which is a respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of small countries relative to large ones.

So what we've seen is American leadership at its best. It doesn't mean that the problems are easy or that they're solved anytime soon, but it indicates the degree to which we continue to be the one indispensable nation. And we should be proud of that. These are big challenges, but we're up to the task.

The second reason I think that there's still some disquiet out there is that although the economy has greatly improved, the incomes and wages of ordinary people have not. And some of this has to do with globalization trends and technology trends, but some of it has to do with policies both in the private sector and in our Government that have made it much more difficult for ordinary people to get ahead. And as concerned as people are about foreign policy, if you ask them what's their number-one concern, it continues to be making sure that if you work hard in this country, you can get ahead and, more importantly, your children have a chance to do better than you did. And for too many people, that proposition has become suspect.

And so the reason that I'm working so hard on behalf of the DSCC is because of what Chuck represents and what Michael represents and what the Senate Democrats represent, is an acknowledgement that we have to grow, and we grow best when everybody is part of the deal. We grow best when middle class families who work hard can save to send their kids to college, and we've got specific ways to help them send their kids to college. We do best when low-income workers who are trying to work their way up into the middle class are getting paid a decent wage, and we've got specific proposals that we know would lift millions of people out of poverty.

We know that our economy would grow faster if we reinvest in roads and bridges and ports. And if we do those things, then not only guys in hard hats would do well, but the entire economy starts growing. And when the economy grows, that means that people are getting hired. And when people are getting hired, then wages and incomes go up more rapidly.

So we have solutions that can make a difference. But that brings me to the third reason people are anxious, and that is, they just think Government doesn't seem to be capable of working anymore. And it's popular to suggest that somehow that's a problem of both parties, a plague on both their houses. But the truth of the matter is, it has to do with a very specific problem, which is, is that the opposition on the other side has become ideologically driven and doesn't seem capable of compromise; cannot say yes even to things they used to be for; and there's been a tendency to put politics ahead of what's best for the next generation.

Democrats aren't perfect. There are times where even I have some complaints, and they certainly sometimes have complaints about me. One of the great things about the Democratic Party is we're extraordinarily diverse. But on issue after issue after issue, we're prepared to take the commonsense, practical, fact-based, reasoned approach to solving problems, because we believe that government serves an important role in making sure that there's opportunity for the next generation.

And that's the reason we need to keep a Democratic Senate. I can list for you all the specific items that are at stake in this election, but the basic proposition is right now that we need a Government made up of people who share in the vision that we have a common role to play in making sure every kid in this country has opportunity and that we can't just look out for our short-term self-interest, we've got to also think about future generations.

That's what's at stake. And I'm prepared to do whatever I can over the next month on behalf of that vision. And I know Chuck is and Michael is, and your presence here today indicates that you are too.

So I'll just close with this basic thought. As challenging as things are—people always ask me, Barack, you must be feeling overwhelmed. They don't say "Barack" these days, but Michelle does. [*Laughter*] And the truth is, perhaps I'm just a little simple. I have never been more optimistic about America's prospects. I look at the data, and I look at the facts, and we have the best cards as long as we're playing right. And I think if we've got a Congress that recognizes that possibility and that opportunity, then we will play those cards right. And our kids will inherit a world that is safer and more prosperous and healthier and has less conflict than ever before in human history. And what an extraordinary possibility to be able to deliver that to our kids and our grandkids. That's in part because of you. So thank you.

All right, guys. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:48 p.m. at the residence of Elizabeth Strickler and Mark T. Gallogly. In his remarks, he referred to Katharine, Grace, and Nell Gallogly, daughters of Ms. Strickler and Mr. Gallogly. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Armed Forces Personnel to Iraq and the Authorization of Military Operations in Syria

September 23, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my reports of August 8 and 17 and September 1 and 8, 2014, I described a series of discrete military operations in Iraq to stop the advance on Erbil by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), support civilians trapped on Mount Sinjar, support operations by Iraqi forces to recapture the Mosul Dam, support an operation to deliver humanitarian assistance to civilians in the town of Amirli, Iraq, and conduct airstrikes in the vicinity of Haditha Dam.

As I noted in my address to the Nation on September 10, with a new Iraqi government in place, and following consultations with allies abroad and the Congress at home, I have ordered implementation of a new comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy to degrade, and ultimately defeat, ISIL. As part of this strategy, I have directed the deployment of 475 additional U.S. Armed Forces personnel to Iraq, and I have determined that it is necessary and appropriate to use the U.S. Armed Forces to conduct coordination with Iraqi forces and to provide training, communications support, intelligence support, and other support, to select elements of the Iraqi security forces, including Kurdish Peshmerga forces. I have also ordered the U.S. Armed Forces to conduct a systematic campaign of airstrikes and other necessary actions against these terrorists in Iraq and Syria. These actions are being undertaken in coordination with and at the request of the Government of Iraq and in conjunction with coalition partners.

It is not possible to know the duration of these deployments and operations. I will continue to direct such additional measures as necessary to protect and secure U.S. citizens and our interests against the threat posed by ISIL.

I have directed these actions, which are in the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to my constitutional and statutory authority as Commander in Chief (including the authority to carry out Public Law 107–40 and Public Law 107–243) and as Chief Executive, as well as my constitutional and statutory authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public

Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Commencement of United States Military Operations in Syria
September 23, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As I have repeatedly reported to the Congress, U.S. Armed Forces continue to conduct operations in a variety of locations against al-Qa'ida and associated forces. In furtherance of these U.S. counterterrorism efforts, on September 22, 2014, at my direction, U.S. military forces began a series of strikes in Syria against elements of al-Qa'ida known as the Khorasan Group. These strikes are necessary to defend the United States and our partners and allies against the threat posed by these elements.

I have directed these actions, which are in the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to my constitutional and statutory authority as Commander in Chief (including the authority to carry out Public Law 107–40) and as Chief Executive, as well as my constitutional and statutory authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City
September 24, 2014

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen: We come together at a crossroad between war and peace, between disorder and integration, between fear and hope.

Around the globe, there are signposts of progress. The shadow of world war that existed at the founding of this institution has been lifted, and the prospect of war between major powers reduced. The ranks of member states has more than tripled, and more people live under governments they elected. Hundreds of millions of human beings have been freed from the prison of poverty, with the proportion of those living in extreme poverty cut in half. And the world economy continues to strengthen after the worst financial crisis of our lives.

Today, whether you live in downtown Manhattan or in my grandmother's village more than 200 miles from Nairobi, you can hold in your hand more information than the world's greatest libraries. Together, we've learned how to cure disease and harness the power of the wind and the sun. The very existence of this institution is a unique achievement: the people of the world committing to resolve their differences peacefully and to solve their problems together. I often tell young people in the United States that despite the headlines, this is the best time in human history to be born, for you are more likely than ever before to be literate, to be healthy, to be free to pursue your dreams.

And yet there is a pervasive unease in our world, a sense that the very forces that have brought us together have created new dangers and made it difficult for any single nation to insulate itself from global forces. As we gather here, an outbreak of Ebola overwhelms public health systems in West Africa and threatens to move rapidly across borders. Russian aggression in Europe recalls the days when large nations trampled small ones in pursuit of territorial ambition. The brutality of terrorists in Syria and Iraq forces us to look into the heart of darkness.

Each of these problems demands urgent attention. But they also are symptoms of a broader problem: the failure of our international system to keep pace with an interconnected world. We, collectively, have not invested adequately in the public health capacity of developing countries. Too often, we have failed to enforce international norms when it's inconvenient to do so. And we have not confronted forcefully enough the intolerance, sectarianism, and hopelessness that feeds violent extremism in too many parts of the globe.

Fellow delegates, we come together as united nations with a choice to make. We can renew the international system that has enabled so much progress, or we can allow ourselves to be pulled back by an undertow of instability. We can reaffirm our collective responsibility to confront global problems or be swamped by more and more outbreaks of instability. And for America, the choice is clear: We choose hope over fear. We see the future not as something out of our control, but as something we can shape for the better through concerted and collective effort. We reject fatalism or cynicism when it comes to human affairs. We choose to work for the world as it should be, as our children deserve it to be.

There is much that must be done to meet the test of this moment. But today I'd like to focus on two defining questions at the root of so many of our challenges: whether the nations here today will be able to renew the purpose of the U.N.'s founding and whether we will come together to reject the cancer of violent extremism.

First, all of us—big nations and small—must meet our responsibility to observe and enforce international norms. We are here because others realized that we gain more from cooperation than conquest. One hundred years ago, a world war claimed the lives of many millions, proving that with the terrible power of modern weaponry, the cause of empire ultimately leads to the graveyard. It would take another world war to roll back the forces of fascism, the notions of racial supremacy, and form this United Nations to ensure that no nation can subjugate its neighbors and claim their territory.

Recently, Russia's actions in Ukraine challenge this postwar order. Here are the facts. After the people of Ukraine mobilized popular protests and calls for reform, their corrupt President fled. Against the will of the Government in Kiev, Crimea was annexed. Russia poured arms into eastern Ukraine, fueling violent separatists and a conflict that has killed thousands. When a civilian airliner was shot down from areas that these proxies controlled, they refused to allow access to the crash for days. When Ukraine started to reassert control over its territory, Russia gave up the pretense of merely supporting the separatists and moved troops across the border.

This is a vision of the world in which might makes right, a world in which one nation's borders can be redrawn by another and civilized people are not allowed to recover the remains of their loved ones because of the truth that might be revealed. America stands for something different. We believe that "right makes might," that bigger nations should not be able to bully smaller ones, and that people should be able to choose their own future.

And these are simple truths, but they must be defended. America and our allies will support the people of Ukraine as they develop their democracy and economy. We will reinforce our NATO allies and uphold our commitment to collective self-defense. We will impose a cost on Russia for aggression, and we will counter falsehoods with the truth. And we call upon others to join us on the right side of history. For while small gains can be won at the barrel of a gun, they will ultimately be turned

back if enough voices support the freedom of nations and peoples to make their own decisions.

Moreover, a different path is available: the path of diplomacy and peace and the ideals this institution is designed to uphold. The recent cease-fire agreement in Ukraine offers an opening to achieve those objectives. If Russia takes that path, a path that for stretches of the post–cold war period resulted in prosperity for the Russian people, then we will lift our sanctions and welcome Russia's role in addressing common challenges. After all, that's what the United States and Russia have been able to do in past years, from reducing our nuclear stockpiles to meeting our obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, to cooperating to remove and destroy Syria's declared chemical weapons. And that's the kind of cooperation we are prepared to pursue again if Russia changes course.

This speaks to a central question of our global age: whether we will solve our problems together, in a spirit of mutual interest and mutual respect, or whether we descend into the destructive rivalries of the past. When nations find common ground, not simply based on power, but on principle, then we can make enormous progress. And I stand before you today committed to investing American strength to working with all nations to address the problems we face in the 21st century.

As we speak, America is deploying our doctors and scientists—supported by our military—to help contain the outbreak of Ebola and pursue new treatments. But we need a broader effort to stop a disease that could kill hundreds of thousands, inflict horrific suffering, destabilize economies, and move rapidly across borders. It's easy to see this as a distant problem until it is not. And that is why we will continue to mobilize other countries to join us in making concrete commitments, significant commitments to fight this outbreak and enhance our system of global health security for the long term.

America is pursuing a diplomatic resolution to the Iranian nuclear issue, as part of our commitment to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and pursue the peace and security of a world without them. And this can only take place if Iran seizes this historic opportunity. And my message to Iran's leaders and people has been simple and consistent: Do not let this opportunity pass. We can reach a solution that meets your energy needs while assuring the world that your program is peaceful.

America is and will continue to be a Pacific power, promoting peace, stability, and the free flow of commerce among nations. But we will insist that all nations abide by the rules of the road and resolve their territorial disputes peacefully, consistent with international law. That's how the Asia-Pacific has grown. And that's the only way to protect this progress going forward.

America is committed to a development agenda that eradicates extreme poverty by 2030. We will do our part to help people feed themselves, power their economies, and care for their sick. And if the world acts together, we can make sure that all of our children enjoy lives of opportunity and dignity.

America is pursuing ambitious reductions in our carbon emissions, and we've increased our investments in clean energy. We will do our part and help developing nations do theirs. But the science tells us we can only succeed in combating climate change if we are joined in this effort by every other nation, by every major power. That's how we can protect this planet for our children and our grandchildren.

In other words, on issue after issue, we cannot rely on a rulebook written for a different century. If we lift our eyes beyond our borders—if we think globally and if we act cooperatively—we can shape the course of this century, as our predecessors shaped the post–World War II age. But as we look to the future, one issue risks a cycle of conflict that could derail so much progress, and that is the cancer of violent extremism that has ravaged so many parts of the Muslim world.

Of course, terrorism is not new. Speaking before this Assembly, President Kennedy put it well. "Terror is not a new weapon," he said. "Throughout history it has been used by those who could not prevail, either by persuasion or

example." In the 20th century, terror was used by all manner of groups who failed to come to power through public support. But in this century, we have faced a more lethal and ideological brand of terrorists who have perverted one of the world's great religions. With access to technology that allows small groups to do great harm, they have embraced a nightmarish vision that would divide the world into adherents and infidels, killing as many innocent civilians as possible, employing the most brutal methods to intimidate people within their communities.

I have made it clear that America will not base our entire foreign policy on reacting to terrorism. Instead, we've waged a focused campaign against Al Qaida and its associated forces: taking out their leaders, denying them the safe havens they rely on. At the same time, we have reaffirmed again and again that the United States is not and never will be at war with Islam. Islam teaches peace. Muslims the world over aspire to live with dignity and a sense of justice. And when it comes to America and Islam, there is no us and them, there is only us, because millions of Muslim Americans are part of the fabric of our country.

So we reject any suggestion of a clash of civilizations. Belief in permanent religious war is the misguided refuge of extremists who cannot build or create anything and therefore peddle only fanaticism and hate. And it is no exaggeration to say that humanity's future depends on us uniting against those who would divide us along the fault lines of tribe or sect, race or religion.

But this is not simply a matter of words. Collectively, we must take concrete steps to address the danger posed by religiously motivated fanatics and the trends that fuel their recruitment. Moreover, this campaign against extremism goes beyond a narrow security challenge. For while we've degraded methodically core Al Qaida and supported a transition to a sovereign Afghan Government, extremist ideology has shifted to other places, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, where a quarter of young people have no job, where food and water could grow scarce, where corruption is rampant, and sectarian conflicts have become increasingly hard to contain.

As an international community, we must meet this challenge with a focus on four areas. First, the terrorist group known as ISIL must be degraded and ultimately destroyed.

This group has terrorized all who they come across in Iraq and Syria. Mothers, sisters, daughters have been subjected to rape as a weapon of war. Innocent children have been gunned down. Bodies have been dumped in mass graves. Religious minorities have been starved to death. In the most horrific crimes imaginable, innocent human beings have been beheaded, with videos of the atrocity distributed to shock the conscience of the world.

No God condones this terror. No grievance justifies these actions. There can be no reasoning—no negotiation—with this brand of evil. The only language understood by killers like this is the language of force. So the United States of America will work with a broad coalition to dismantle this network of death.

In this effort, we do not act alone, nor do we intend to send U.S. troops to occupy foreign lands. Instead, we will support Iraqis and Syrians fighting to reclaim their communities. We will use our military might in a campaign of airstrikes to roll back ISIL. We will train and equip forces fighting against these terrorists on the ground. We will work to cut off their financing and to stop the flow of fighters into and out of the region. And already, over 40 nations have offered to join this coalition.

Today I ask the world to join in this effort. Those who have joined ISIL should leave the battlefield while they can. Those who continue to fight for a hateful cause will find they are increasingly alone. For we will not succumb to threats, and we will demonstrate that the future belongs to those who build, not those who destroy. So that's an immediate challenge, the first challenge that we must meet.

The second: It is time for the world—especially Muslim communities—to explicitly, forcefully, and consistently reject the ideology of organizations like Al Qaida and ISIL.

It is one of the tasks of all great religions to accommodate devout faith with a modern,

multicultural world. No children are born hating, and no children anywhere should be educated to hate other people. There should be no more tolerance of so-called clerics who call upon people to harm innocents because they're Jewish or because they're Christian or because they're Muslim. It is time for a new compact among the civilized peoples of this world to eradicate war at its most fundamental source, and that is the corruption of young minds by violent ideology.

That means cutting off the funding that fuels this hate. It's time to end the hypocrisy of those who accumulate wealth through the global economy and then siphon funds to those who teach children to tear it down.

That means contesting the space that terrorists occupy, including the Internet and social media. Their propaganda has coerced young people to travel abroad to fight their wars and turned students—young people full of potential—into suicide bombers. We must offer an alternative vision.

It means bringing people of different faiths together. All religions have been attacked by extremists from within at some point, and all people of faith have a responsibility to lift up the value at the heart of all great religions: Do unto thy neighbor as you would do—you would have done unto yourself.

The ideology of ISIL or Al Qaida or Boko Haram will wilt and die if it is consistently exposed and confronted and refuted in the light of day. Look at the new Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies. Shaykh bin Bayyah described its purpose: "We must declare war on war so the outcome will be peace upon peace." Look at the young British Muslims who responded to terrorist propaganda by starting the "NotInMyName" campaign, declaring, "ISIS is hiding behind a false Islam." Look at the Christian and Muslim leaders who came together in the Central African Republic to reject violence; listen to the Imam who said, "Politics try to divide the religious in our country, but religion shouldn't be a cause of hate, war, or strife."

Later today the Security Council will adopt a resolution that underscores the responsibility of states to counter violent extremism. But resolutions must be followed by tangible commitments so we're accountable when we fall short. Next year, we should all be prepared to announce the concrete steps that we have taken to counter extremist ideologies in our own countries, by getting intolerance out of schools, stopping radicalization before it spreads, and promoting institutions and programs that build new bridges of understanding.

Third, we must address the cycle of conflict—especially sectarian conflict—that creates the conditions that terrorists prey upon.

There is nothing new about wars within religions. Christianity endured centuries of vicious sectarian conflict. Today, it is violence within Muslim communities that has become the source of so much human misery. It is time to acknowledge the destruction wrought by proxy wars and terror campaigns between Sunni and Shia across the Middle East. And it is time that political, civic, and religious leaders reject sectarian strife. For let's be clear: This is a fight that no one is winning. A brutal civil war in Syria has already killed nearly 200,000 people, displaced millions. Iraq has come perilously close to plunging back into the abyss. The conflict has created a fertile recruiting ground for terrorists who inevitably export this violence.

The good news is, we also see signs that this tide could be reversed. We have a new, inclusive Government in Baghdad, a new Iraqi Prime Minister welcomed by his neighbors, Lebanese factions rejecting those who try to provoke war. And these steps must be followed by a broader truce. Nowhere is this more necessary than Syria.

Together with our partners, America is training and equipping the Syrian opposition to be a counterweight to the terrorists of ISIL and the brutality of the Asad regime. But the only lasting solution to Syria's civil war is political: an inclusive political transition that responds to the legitimate aspirations of all Syrian citizens, regardless of ethnicity, regardless of creed.

Now, cynics may argue that such an outcome can never come to pass. But there is no other way for this madness to end, whether 1

year from now or 10. And it points to the fact that it's time for a broader negotiation in the region in which major powers address their differences directly, honestly, and peacefully across the table from one another, rather than through gun-wielding proxies. I can promise you, America will remain engaged in the region, and we are prepared to engage in that effort.

And my fourth and final point is a simple one: The countries of the Arab and Muslim world must focus on the extraordinary potential of their people, especially the youth.

And here, I'd like to speak directly to young people across the Muslim world. You come from a great tradition that stands for education, not ignorance; innovation, not destruction; the dignity of life, not murder. Those who call you away from this path are betraying this tradition, not defending it.

You have demonstrated that when young people have the tools to succeed—good schools, education in math and science, an economy that nurtures creativity and entrepreneurship—then societies will flourish. So America will partner with those that promote that vision.

Where women are full participants in a country's politics or economy, societies are more likely to succeed. And that's why we support the participation of women in parliaments and peace processes, schools and the economy.

If young people live in places where the only option is between the dictates of a state or the lure of an extremist underground, then no counterterrorism strategy can succeed. But where a genuine civil society is allowed to flourish—where people can express their views and organize peacefully for a better life—then you dramatically expand the alternatives to terror.

And such positive change need not come at the expense of tradition and faith. We see this in Iraq, where a young man started a library for his peers. "We link Iraq's heritage to their hearts," he said, and "give them a reason to stay." We see it in Tunisia, where secular and Islamist parties worked together through a political process to produce a new Constitution. We see it in Senegal, where civil society thrives alongside a strong democratic government. We see it in Malaysia, where vibrant entrepreneurship is propelling a former colony into the ranks of advanced economies. And we see it in Indonesia, where what began as a violent transition has evolved into a genuine democracy.

Now, ultimately, the task of rejecting sectarianism and rejecting extremism is a generational task and a task for the people of the Middle East themselves. No external power can bring about a transformation of hearts and minds. But America will be a respectful and constructive partner. We will neither tolerate terrorist safe havens, nor act as an occupying power. We will take action against threats to our security and our allies, while building an architecture of counterterrorism cooperation. We will increase efforts to lift up those who counter extremist ideologies and who seek to resolve sectarian conflict. And we will expand our programs to support entrepreneurship and civil society, education and youth, because ultimately, these investments are the best antidote to violence.

We recognize as well that leadership will be necessary to address the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. As bleak as the landscape appears, America will not give up on the pursuit of peace. Understand, the situation in Iraq and Syria and Libya should cure anybody of the illusion that the Arab-Israeli conflict is the main source of problems in the region. For far too long, that's been used as an excuse to distract people from problems at home. The violence engulfing the region today has made too many Israelis ready to abandon the hard work of peace. And that's something worthy of reflection within Israel.

Because let's be clear: The status quo in the West Bank and Gaza is not sustainable. We cannot afford to turn away from this effort, not when rockets are fired at innocent Israelis or the lives of so many Palestinian children are taken from us in Gaza. And so long as I am President, we will stand up for the principle that Israelis, Palestinians, the region, and the world will be more just and more safe with two states living side by side in peace and security.

So this is what America is prepared to do: taking action against immediate threats, while pursuing a world in which the need for such action is diminished. The United States will never shy away from defending our interests, but we will also not shy away from the promise of this institution and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the notion that peace is not merely the absence of war, but the presence of a better life.

I realize that America's critics will be quick to point out that at times we too have failed to live up to our ideals, that America has plenty of problems within its own borders. This is true. In a summer marked by instability in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, I know the world also took notice of the small American city of Ferguson, Missouri, where a young man was killed and a community was divided. So yes, we have our own racial and ethnic tensions. And like every country, we continually wrestle with how to reconcile the vast changes wrought by globalization and greater diversity with the traditions that we hold dear.

But we welcome the scrutiny of the world, because what you see in America is a country that has steadily worked to address our problems, to make our Union more perfect, to bridge the divides that existed at the founding of this Nation. America is not the same as it was 100 years ago or 50 years ago or even a decade ago: because we fight for our ideals and we are willing to criticize ourselves when we fall short; because we hold our leaders accountable and insist on a free press and independent judiciary; because we address our differences in the open space of democracy, with respect for the rule of law, with a place for people of every race and every religion, and with an unyielding belief in the ability of individual men and women to change their communities and their circumstances and their countries for the better.

After nearly 6 years as President, I believe that this promise can help light the world. Because I have seen a longing for positive change—for peace and for freedom and for opportunity and for the end to bigotry—in the eyes of young people who I've met around the globe.

They remind me that no matter who you are or where you come from or what you look like or what God you pray to or who you love, there is something fundamental that we all share. Eleanor Roosevelt, a champion of the U.N. and America's role in it, once asked: "Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places," she said, "close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works."

Around the world, young people are moving forward hungry for a better world. Around the world, in small places, they're overcoming hatred and bigotry and sectarianism. And they're learning to respect each other, despite differences.

The people of the world now look to us, here, to be as decent and as dignified and as courageous as they are trying to be in their daily lives. And at this crossroads, I can promise you that the United States of America will not be distracted or deterred from what must be done. We are heirs to a proud legacy of freedom, and we're prepared to do what is necessary to secure that legacy for generations to come. I ask that you join us in this common mission, for today's children and tomorrow's.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:13 a.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President, 69th Session of the U.N. General Assembly; former President Viktor Fedorovych Yanukovych of Ukraine; Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah, trustee, Global Center for Renewal and Guidance; Oumar Kobine Laya, president, Central African Islamic Community; Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; and Ali al-Makhzomy, who founded a lending library at the al-Atrakchi House cafe in Baghdad, Iraq. He also referred to his paternal grandmother Sarah Obama; and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq in New York City

September 24, 2014

President Obama. Well, I want to thank Prime Minister Abadi and his delegation for the opportunity to meet here this morning.

As I've said previously, the United States and Iraq have a strategic relationship that is important to both countries. We believe in a vision of an Iraq that is inclusive, in which Sunni, Shia, Kurd are all able to come together to peacefully iron out their differences and to achieve prosperity and peace for all the people of the country.

Obviously, Iraq is under enormous threat at the moment from the organization that calls itself ISIL. And as I've discussed today and for many weeks now, we consider ISIL to be a threat not only to Iraq, but to the region, to the world, and to the United States.

We are committed to working in support of Iraq regaining territory that ISIL has currently taken over and making sure that an inclusive Iraqi Government is able to control its territory and push ISIL back. In doing that, we are coordinating closely in our military campaign. And the airstrikes and air support that we're able to provide, as well as the training and assistance, I think will be critical in partnership with Iraqi forces on the ground.

One of the things I'm very impressed with, however, is the fact that Prime Minister Abadi understands that in order for Iraq to succeed, it's not just a matter of a military campaign; it's also the need for political outreach to all factions within the country. And I've been very impressed with Prime Minister Abadi's vision.

Since he took over the Prime Ministership, he has reached out systematically to all the peoples of Iraq. He has articulated a vision of reform and a commitment to moving forward with many of the laws that had previously stalled, but offer the potential of unleashing energy and entrepreneurship inside of Iraq.

And so, in addition to the military campaign in which we're going to be coordinating, I want to say directly to the Prime Minister that we fully support his political vision, and we are also encouraged by his willingness to reach out and work with other countries in the region who are going to be very important in supporting our overall effort to defeat ISIL.

Last point I would make: I think that the Prime Minister recognizes, this is not something that is going to be easy and it is not going to happen overnight. But after talking with the Prime Minister, I'm confident that he's the right person to help work with a broad-based coalition of like-minded Iraqis and that they will be successful.

And my main message to the Prime Minister is that although we cannot do this for you, we can be a strong partner, and we are fully committed to your success. We wish you Godspeed. And we are grateful for your willingness to take on this leadership mantle at such a critical time in your country's history.

[*At this point, Prime Minister Abadi spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Prime Minister Abadi. In the name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful, I would like to thank President Obama for allowing for this opportunity for Iraq to explain its points of view towards the confrontation that is happening in Iraq and in which Iraq is at the forefront of the confrontation against the forces of ISIL.

Iraqi people have confronted this very brutal, ruthless attack on the Iraqi territory with bravery, and I am very proud to say that I am the commander of the Iraqi Armed Forces. Our Armed Forces have also offered a lot of sacrifices when they confronted the Daesh attack. And I can say today that in many of the areas we are now turning around the ground.

Today I am also proud to say that our people are brave, and I am—the popular effort on the ground has been of utmost importance. I am keen to protect our brave people on the ground, and I am proud of their sacrifices and protect them and protect all that they have

been doing to protect their communities on the ground, their religious sites, and to stand a firm stance against the terrorist attacks that targeted the minorities and targeted and killed children, men, and women.

In my discussion with President Obama, I emphasized the importance of the respect of the sovereignty of Iraq and the territorial integrity of Iraq. And as a Prime Minister of Iraq, I reaffirmed my—I reaffirmed the importance for all forces that want to help Iraq to respect the sovereignty of Iraq and the—its territorial integrity. I am very thankful for President Obama and all the allies, all who are helping, for maintaining and respecting the territorial integrity of Iraq and its sovereignty.

Finally, one of the requests that I have put forth for President Obama is the importance of equipping and arming the Iraqi Army and to provide the Iraqi Armed Forces with weapons. As you know, our Armed Forces are in dire need for equipment and for weapons, mostly because we lost a lot of the equipment and the weapons in our confrontation and our fight against ISIL, and specifically, when the ISIL groups came through the borders from Syria, many of the weapons were destroyed. Some of the weapons were—fell in the hand of ISIL. Therefore, I am very thankful for President Obama that he promised that weapons and supplies would be delivered to Iraq as soon as possible so Iraq can defeat ISIL and Iraq can overcome this crisis.

We are keen in Iraq to promote further the strategic relationship between our two countries, a strategic relationship that is based on mutual respect within the strategic framework agreement that was signed between the two governments back in 2008. I am pleased to say that President Obama has promised to reinvigorate the strategic framework agreement not only to put the focus on the military and security aspect of that agreement, but also on all other levels: scientific, educational, economic, cultural and academic, social and other aspects of our relationship.

Mr. President, I thank you for all your support and all the promises that you have given us. And I hope to see that these promises will be concretely fulfilled on the ground as soon as possible. Thank you.

[*Prime Minister Abadi spoke in English as follows.*]

Prime Minister Abadi. Thank you Mr. President.

President Obama. Appreciate it.

Prime Minister Abadi. Thank you very much.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations in New York City
September 24, 2014

Well, good afternoon. First of all, you should know that the Secretary-General was late because of me. I take the blame.

Second of all, I do think it's appropriate to thank the incredible hospitality of the people of New York City. Some of you know I lived in New York, went to school in New York, love New York, love the people. But as somebody who has lived here as a civilian during UNGA, it is no fun. [*Laughter*] In fact, in 2008, I had already won the nomination, was a month away from my election as President, and had full Secret Service, and I still couldn't get through the traffic and had to walk three blocks in order to get into the building. [*Laughter*] That's how bad it was. So it is tough.

But the people of New York, we want to thank you for doing what you do, because you are such an incredible, incredible city.

I've already given a long speech today. I'm going to be very brief. As host nation, I want to thank all of you for your commitment to our work. Nobody works harder and truer to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations than our Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. And so I want to publicly thank him for his tireless work on every issue, from Ebola to climate change, to violations of human rights, to armed conflict, he is on the job and been doing outstanding work.

I also want to recognize the thousands of men and women at the United Nations who give meaning and action to all the words that we politicians produce during the course of General Assembly meetings and Security Council meetings. Oftentimes, they operate outside of the limelight. But if it were not for their dedication, hard work, and sacrifice, then this would just be a debating club. And so we want to thank very much the—all the employees and staff of the United Nations not just for helping to facilitate this meeting, but for what they do all year around. Thank you very much.

Along those same lines, we want to salute the thousands of Blue Helmets who stand sentinel around the world, particularly across Africa and the Middle East. The tragic loss of five peacekeepers in Mali last week reminds us that there are real risks that these peacekeepers take on so that others can lead a better life. We salute the United Nations aid workers who are on the front lines of humanitarian efforts in Syria, delivering comfort and support to civilians battered by civil war. And we thank the heroic U.N. health workers in West Africa who are combating Ebola and caring for the sick at some risk to themselves.

These men and women, from so many of our nations, reflect the common pursuit of peace and prosperity. We could not be prouder of their work. They represent what I think the United Nations should be all about. And when I think of them, I'm reminded that although all of us have the extraordinary privilege of representing our countries in very high offices, the truth is, change happens on the ground, and none of us can do this alone.

So I propose a toast to the human spirit that these workers and personnel and peacekeepers around the world represent: the best of who we are and what we all share in common as children of God and as people who hope to pass on peace and prosperity to our children and our grandchildren for generations to come.

Cheers.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:51 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters.

Remarks at a United Nations Security Council Summit on Foreign Terrorist Fighters in New York City

September 24, 2014

Thank you, His Excellency, the Secretary-General, for his statement. I'll now make a statement in my capacity as President of the United States.

Mr. Secretary-General, heads of state and government, distinguished representatives, thank you for being here today.

In the nearly 70 years of the United Nations, this is only the sixth time that the Security Council has met at a level like this. We convene such sessions to address the most urgent threats to peace and security. And I called this meeting because we must come together—as nations and an international community—to confront the real and growing threat of foreign terrorist fighters.

As I said earlier today, the tactic of terrorism is not new. So many nations represented here today, including my own, have seen our citizens killed by terrorists who target innocents. And today the people of the world have been horrified by another brutal murder, of Hervé Gourdel, by terrorists in Algeria. President Hollande, we stand with you and the French people not only as you grieve this terrible loss,

but as you show resolve against terror and in defense of liberty.

What brings us together today, what is new, is the unprecedented flow of fighters in recent years to and from conflict zones, including Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa, Yemen, Libya, and most recently, Syria and Iraq.

Our intelligence agencies estimate that more than 15,000 foreign fighters from more than 80 nations have traveled to Syria in recent years. Many have joined terrorist organizations such as Al Qaida's affiliate, the Nusra Front, and ISIL, which now threatens people across Syria and Iraq. And I want to acknowledge and thank Prime Minister Abadi of Iraq for being here today.

In the Middle East and elsewhere, these terrorists exacerbate conflicts, they pose an immediate threat to people in these regions; and as we've already seen in several cases, they may try to return to their home countries to carry out deadly attacks. In the face of this threat, many of our nations, working together and through the United Nations, have increased our cooperation. Around the world, foreign terrorist fighters have been arrested, plots have been disrupted, and lives have been saved.

Earlier this year, at West Point, I called for a new partnership to help nations build their capacity to meet the evolving threat of terrorism, including foreign terrorist fighters. And preventing these individuals from reaching Syria and then slipping back across our borders is a critical element of our strategy to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL.

The historic resolution that we just adopted enshrines our commitment to meet this challenge. It is legally binding. It establishes new obligations that nations must meet. Specifically, nations are required to "prevent and suppress the recruiting, organizing, transporting or equipping" of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as the financing of their travel or activities. Nations must "prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups" through their territory and ensure that their domestic laws allow for the prosecution of those who attempt to do so.

The resolution we passed today calls on nations to help build the capacity of states on the front lines of this fight, including with the best practices that many of our nations have approved yesterday, and which the United States will work to advance through our Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund. This resolution will strengthen cooperation between nations, including sharing more information about the travel and activities of foreign terrorist fighters. And it makes clear that respecting human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law is not optional, it is an essential part of successful counterterrorism efforts. Indeed, history teaches us that the failure to uphold these rights and freedoms can actually fuel violent extremism.

Finally, this resolution recognizes that there is no military solution to the problem of misguided individuals seeking to join terrorist organizations, and it therefore calls on nations to work together to counter the violent extremism that can radicalize, recruit, and mobilize individuals to engage in terrorism. Potential recruits must hear the words of former terrorist fighters who have seen the truth: that groups like ISIL betray Islam by killing innocent men, women, and children, the majority of whom are Muslim.

Often it is local communities—family, friends, neighbors, and faith leaders—that are best able to identify and help disillusioned individuals before they succumb to extremist ideologies and engage in violence. And that's why the United States Government is committed to working with communities in America and around the world to build partnerships of trust, respect, and cooperation.

Likewise, even as we are unrelenting against terrorists who threaten our people, we must redouble our work to address the conditions—the repression, the lack of opportunity, too often the hopelessness—that can make some individuals more susceptible to appeals to extremism and violence. And this includes continuing to pursue a political solution in Syria that allows all Syrians to live in security, dignity, and peace.

This is the work that we must do together as nations. These are the partnerships we must forge as an international community. And

these are the standards that we now must meet. Yet even as we're guided by the commitments that we make here today, let me close by stating the obvious. Resolutions alone will not be enough. Promises on paper cannot keep us safe. Lofty rhetoric and good intentions will not stop a single terrorist attack.

The words spoken here today must be matched and translated into action, into deeds, concrete action, within nations and between them, not just in the days ahead, but for years to come. For if there was ever a challenge in our interconnected world that cannot be met by one nation alone, it is this: terrorists crossing borders and threatening to unleash unspeakable violence. These terrorists believe our countries will be unable to stop them. The safety of our citizens demand that we do. And I'm here today to say that all of you who are committed to this urgent work will find a strong and steady partner in the United States of America.

I now would like to resume my function as President of the Council. And I will now give the floor to the other members of the Security Council.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:11 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Hervé Gourdel, a French mountaineering guide who was killed by members of the Jund al-Khilafa terrorist organization in Kabylia, Algeria, on September 24; and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at a Meeting of the Open Government Partnership in New York City
September 24, 2014

Well, thank you very much. And thank you, Rakesh, for your introduction. It is wonderful to see all of you here today. And I still remember your eloquent words when we launched this effort 3 years ago, and I'm very grateful for the role you've played and NGOs have played and all the leadership that is represented here has played in making this a reality, which is making a real difference in the lives of so many countries that are participating.

I want to thank my good friend, President Yudhoyono, for your leadership and the example that Indonesia has tried to set as a country that has transitioned from a difficult past to a full-blown democracy. And I also want to thank Minister Kuntoro for hosting us here today. Both of them have shown extraordinary leadership in this partnership over the past several years.

President Yudhoyono will be—this will be the last time, I think, that we see each other in his official capacity, but not in terms of our friendship. And I think that it's fitting that he's participating here today and leading it, because it reflects the legacy of his work. And I also want to acknowledge my dear friend President Peña Nieto of Mexico, as well as President Zuma of South Africa, who have agreed to lead the partnership in the coming year.

I'm thrilled to see so many leaders from civil society, men and women who stand up for equality and opportunity and justice and freedom every single day. And it's not always easy to do. Yesterday I had a chance to speak about the importance of supporting civil society across the globe, because throughout history, progress has always been driven by citizens who have the courage to raise their voices and imagine not just what is, but what might be, and that are willing to work to bring about the change that they seek.

Three years ago, the United States and seven other nations launched this Open Government Partnership to represent the other side of that equation, because when citizens demand progress, governments need to be able to respond. And in a new millennium flush with technology that allows us to connect with a tweet or a text, citizens rightly demand more responsiveness, more openness, more transparency, more accountability from their governments.

In just 3 short years, this partnership has grown from 8 nations to 64. It's helped to

transform the way governments serve their citizens. Together, we have made more than 2,000 commitments, improving how governments serve more than 2 billion people worldwide. More citizens are petitioning their governments online, and more citizens are participating directly in policymaking. More entrepreneurs are using open data to innovate and start new businesses. More sunlight is shining on how tax dollars are spent. And more governments are partnering with civil society to find new ways to expose corruption and improve good governance.

Here in the United States, we've been trying to lead by example. We're working to open up and share more data with entrepreneurs so they can pursue the new innovations and businesses that create jobs. We're working to modernize our Freedom of Information Act process so that it's easier for Americans to use, so that they can see the workings of their Government. And today I'm proud to announce a series of new commitments to expand and broaden our open government efforts.

We're going to work more closely with the health care sector and State and local law enforcement, not just to improve public health and safety, but to better protect the privacy and personal information of the American people. We're going to improve transparency with our upgraded website, usaspending.gov, to make it easier for Americans to access and understand how the Federal Government spends their tax dollars.

We're going to collaborate more closely with the private sector and the best minds in our country so that when we design websites or technologies to better serve the public, we're benefiting from the best of American ingenuity and the latest technologies. And because we know that education is a cornerstone for progress—if we want good governance, we need a educated and informed citizenry—we're going to do more to help people in other countries, especially students, access the incredible online educational tools and resources that we have here in the States.

In addition, as part of our leadership in the global fight against corruption, we intend to partner with American businesses to develop a national plan to promote responsible and transparent business conduct overseas. We already have laws in place; they're significantly stronger than the laws of many other countries. But we think we can do better. And we think that ultimately, it will be good for everybody, including business. Because when they know there's a rule of law, when they don't have to pay a bribe to ship their goods or to finalize a contract, that means they're more likely to invest, and that means more jobs and prosperity for everybody.

As we look ahead, I believe that continuing this global fight against corruption has to remain a central focus in this partnership. It's an area where we can expand our efforts. Corruption is not simply immoral. From a practical perspective, it siphons off billions of dollars from the public and private sectors that could be used to feed children or build schools or build infrastructure that promotes development. It also promotes economic inequality. It facilitates human rights abuses. It fuels organized crime and terrorism and ultimately instability.

Passing anticorruption laws is necessary, and then those laws have to be enforced so that those who steal from their people are held accountable and so citizens have faith that the system is not rigged and that justice will be done. We need to do more to track down the proceeds of corruption and prevent our legal and financial systems from becoming safe havens for money gained through bribes or fraud. And we need to do more to ensure transparency and accountability in industries that can be especially vulnerable to corruption, such as the extraction of natural resources. That's not just good for businesses, it helps support development in countries that depend on these industries for growth and for jobs.

In all of these efforts as governments, we're going to have to deepen our partnerships with civil society. As I announced yesterday, I've directed the U.S. Government to elevate its engagement with civil society groups around the world. After all, the Open Government Partnership is not simply a partnership between

governments; it's between governments and their citizens. At times, this can be frustrating. At times, it can be contentious. I think it's fair to say that all governments think they're doing what's right and don't like criticism. And it's shocking to say that not all criticism from civil society is always fair. [*Laughter*] But, as leaders, making our governments more open does mean that as a consequence of that criticism, there's self-reflection. And it means that questions are asked that might not have otherwise been asked and that groupthink doesn't develop inside of a government and that people don't start as easily rationalizing behavior that, if shown in the light of day, people would object to.

And what—as we've seen through the leadership of Rakesh and so many others who are here today, open and honest collaboration with citizens and civil society over the long term, no matter how uncomfortable it is, makes countries stronger, and it makes countries more successful, and it creates more prosperous economies and more just societies and more opportunity for citizens.

So the achievement of these first 3 years are an example of the kind of steady, step-by-step progress that is possible for people and countries around the world. No country has all the answers. No country has perfect practices. So we have to continue to find new ways to learn from each other, to share best practices, and most importantly, to turn the commitments that we've made into real and meaningful action that improves the daily lives of our citizens. I'm confident that if we do that, we can ensure that we're living up to the basic truth that governments exist to serve the people and not the other way around.

Let me just close by saying this: When we started this, we didn't know if it was going to work. And I could not be more proud to see the enormous changes that are taking place all around the globe, in small increments sometimes. It's not flashy. It doesn't generate a lot of headlines. But the work you're doing here is a steady wave of better government and a steady wave of stronger civil societies. And over time, that means that not only will individual countries be stronger and not only will the citizens of those countries have greater opportunity and less—and are less prone to experience injustice, but that translates into a world that is more just and more fair. And that's the kind of world that I want to leave my children.

So congratulations on the good work. But don't let up—as I'm sure you won't, because I know some of you. [*Laughter*] Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Rakesh Rajani, head, Twaweza initiative in East Africa; President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, in his capacity as the 2014 chairman of the Open Government Partnership; and Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, Head, Indonesian President's Delivery Unit for Development Monitoring and Oversight.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia in New York City
September 25, 2014

President Obama. Well, I want to extend a warm welcome to Prime Minister Hailemariam and his delegation. When I spoke previously at the Africa Summit about some of the bright spots and progress that we're seeing in Africa, I think there's no better example than what has been happening in Ethiopia, one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

We have seen enormous progress in a country that once had great difficulty feeding itself. It's now not only leading the pack in terms of agricultural production in the region, but will soon be an exporter, potentially not just of agriculture, but also power because of the development that's been taking place there.

We're strong trading partners. And most recently, Boeing has done a deal with Ethiopia, which will result in jobs here in the United States. And in discussions with Ban Ki-moon yesterday, we discussed how critical it is for us to improve our effectiveness when it comes to peacekeeping and conflict resolution. And it turns out that Ethiopia may be one of the best in the world: one of the largest contributors of peacekeeping, one of the most effective fighting forces when it comes to being placed in some very difficult situations and helping to resolve conflicts.

So Ethiopia has been not only a leader economically in the continent, but also when it comes to security and trying to resolve some of the longstanding conflicts there. We are very appreciative of those efforts, and we look forward to partnering with them. This will give us an opportunity to talk about how we can enhance our strategic dialogue around a whole range of issues, from health, the economy, agriculture, but also some hotspot areas like South Sudan, where Ethiopia has been working very hard trying to bring the parties together, but recognizes that this is a challenge that we're all going to have to work together on as part of an international community.

So I want to extend my thanks to the Prime Minister for his good work. And we look forward to not only an excellent discussion, but a very productive relationship going forward.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Hailemariam. Thank you very much, Mr. President. First of all, I would like to thank you very much for receiving us during this very busy time. We value very much the relationship between the United States and Ethiopia. And as you mentioned, my country is moving, transforming the economy of the nation. But needless to say that the support of the United States in our endeavor to move forward has been remarkable.

I think the most important thing is to have the human capability to develop ourselves. And the United States has supported us in the health programs that helped us move forward in having healthy human beings that can produce. And as you mentioned, agriculture is the main source of our economic growth, and that has been the case because we do have our farmers which are devoid of malaria, which is the main debilitating disease while producing. So I think that has helped us a lot.

And we value also the support the United States has offered to us in terms of engaging the private sector, especially your initiative and the Power Africa program, which is taking shape. I think it's remarkable and a model kind of approach. And in that sense, we are obliged to thank you very much for this program and to deepen this Power Africa initiative.

Beyond that, you know that through your initiative and the leaders in the United States, we have the Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, which is the most important program, where a private-public partnership is taking shape. We have a number of U.S. investors now engaged in agricultural production and helping the smallholder farmers, which is the basis for our agricultural growth that's taking place now in Ethiopia.

Besides, peace and security is very essential for any kind of development to take place. In that sense, our cooperation in peace and security and pacifying the region, the continent, as well as our Horn of Africa, which is a troublesome region really, I think this has helped us a lot to bring peace and tranquility in the region. And we feel that we have strong cooperation. We have to deepen it. We have to extend now our efforts to pacify the region and the continent. Of course, also, we have to cooperate globally, not only in Africa, and that relationship has to continue.

So, Mr. President, thank you very much for receiving us. We value this relationship, which is excellent, and we want to deepen it and continue—[*inaudible*].

President Obama. Excellent. Two last points I want to make. Obviously, we've been talking a lot about terrorism and the focus has been on ISIL, but in Somalia, we've seen al-Shabaab, an affiliate of Al Qaida, wreak havoc throughout that country. That's an area where the cooperation and leadership on the part of Ethiopia is making a difference as we speak. And we want to thank them for that.

So our counterterrorism cooperation and the partnerships that we have formed with countries like Ethiopia are going to be critical to our overall efforts to defeat terrorism.

And also, the Prime Minister and the Government is going to be organizing elections in Ethiopia this year. I know something about that. We've got some midterms coming up. And so we'll have an opportunity to talk about civil society and governance and how we can make sure that Ethiopia's progress and example can extend to civil society as well and making sure that throughout the continent of Africa, we continue to widen and broaden our efforts at democracy, all of which isn't just good for politics, but ends up being good for economics as well, as we discussed at the Africa Summit.

So thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:57 a.m. at the Waldorf Astoria New York hotel. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at a United Nations Meeting on the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa in New York City

September 25, 2014

Mr. Secretary-General, thank you for bringing us together today to address an urgent threat to the people of West Africa, but also a potential threat to the world. Dr. Chan, heads of state and government, especially our African partners, ladies and gentlemen: As we gather here today, the people of Liberia and Sierra Leone and Guinea are in crisis. As Secretary-General Ban and Dr. Chan have already indicated, the Ebola virus is spreading at alarming speed. Thousands of men, women, and children have died. Thousands more are infected. If unchecked, this epidemic could kill hundreds of thousands of people in the coming months. Hundreds of thousands.

Ebola is a horrific disease. It's wiping out entire families. It's turned simple acts of love and comfort and kindness, like holding a sick friend's hand or embracing a dying child, into potentially fatal acts. If ever there were a public health emergency deserving an urgent, strong, and coordinated international response, this is it.

But this is also more than a health crisis. This is a growing threat to regional and global security. In Liberia, in Guinea, in Sierra Leone, public health systems have collapsed. Economic growth is slowing dramatically. If this epidemic is not stopped, this disease could cause a humanitarian catastrophe across the region. And in an era where regional crises can quickly become global threats, stopping Ebola is in the interest of all of us.

Now, the courageous men and women fighting on the front lines of this disease have told us what they need. They need more beds, they need more supplies, they need more health workers, and they need all of this as fast as possible. Right now patients are being left to die in the streets because there's nowhere to put them and there's nobody to help them. One health worker in Sierra Leone compared fighting this outbreak to "fighting a forest fire with spray bottles." But with our help, they can put out the blaze.

Last week, I visited the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which is mounting the largest international response in its history. I said that the world could count on America to lead and that we will provide the capabilities that only we have and mobilize the world the way we have done in the past in crises of similar magnitude. And I announced that, in addition to the civilian response, the United States would establish a military command in Liberia to support civilian efforts across the region.

Today, that command is up, and it is running. Our commander is on the ground in Monrovia, and our teams are working as fast as they can to move in personnel, equipment, and supplies. We're working with Senegal to stand up an airbridge to get health workers and

medical supplies into West Africa faster. We're setting up a field hospital, which will be staffed by personnel from the U.S. Public Health Service, and a training facility, where we're getting ready to train thousands of health workers from around the world. We're distributing supplies and information kits to hundreds of thousands of families so they can better protect themselves. And together with our partners, we'll quickly build new treatment units across Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, where thousands will be able to receive care.

Meanwhile, in just the past week, more countries and organizations have stepped up their efforts, and so has the United Nations. Mr. Secretary-General, the new U.N. Mission for Ebola Emergency Response that you announced last week will bring all of the U.N.'s resources to bear in fighting the epidemic. We thank you for your leadership.

So this is all progress, and it is encouraging. But I want us to be clear: We are not moving fast enough. We are not doing enough. Right now everybody has the best of intentions, but people are not putting in the kinds of resources that are necessary to put a stop to this epidemic. There is still a significant gap between where we are and where we need to be. We know from experience that the response to an outbreak of this magnitude has to be fast and it has to be sustained. It's a marathon, but you have to run it like a sprint. And that's only possible if everybody chips in, if every nation and every organization takes this seriously. Everybody here has to do more.

International organizations have to move faster and cut through redtape and mobilize partners on the ground as only they can. More nations need to contribute critical assets and capabilities, whether it is air transport or medical evacuation or health care workers or equipment or treatment. More foundations can tap into the networks of support that they have to raise funds and awareness. More businesses, especially those who already have a presence in the region, can quickly provide their own expertise and resources, from access to critical supply chains to telecommunications. And more citizens—of all nations—can educate themselves on this crisis, contribute to relief efforts, and call on their leaders to act. So everybody can do something. That's why we're here today.

And even as we meet the urgent threat of Ebola, it's clear that our nations have to do more to prevent, detect, and respond to future biological threats—before they erupt into full-blown crises. So tomorrow, in Washington, I'll host 44 nations to advance our global health security agenda, and we are interested in working with any country that shares this commitment.

Just to emphasize this issue of speed again: When I was down at the CDC—and perhaps this has already been discussed, but I want to emphasize this—the outbreak is such where at this point, more people will die. But the slope of the curve, how fast we can arrest the spread of this disease, how quickly we can contain it is within our control. And if we move fast, even if imperfectly, then that could mean the difference between 10,000, 20,000, 30,000 deaths versus hundreds of thousands or even a million deaths. So this is not one where there should be a lot of wrangling and people waiting to see who else is doing what. Everybody has got to move fast in order for us to make a difference. And if we do, we'll save hundreds of thousands of lives.

Stopping Ebola is a priority for the United States. I've said that this is as important a national security priority for my team as anything else that's out there. We'll do our part. We will continue to lead, but this has to be a priority for everybody else. We cannot do this alone. We don't have the capacity to do all of this by ourselves. We don't have enough health workers by ourselves. We can build the infrastructure and the architecture to get help in, but we're going to need others to contribute.

To my fellow leaders from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, to the people of West Africa, to the heroic health workers who are on the ground as we speak, in some cases, putting themselves at risk: I want you to know that you are not alone. We're working urgently to get you the help you need. And we will not stop—

we will not relent—until we halt this epidemic once and for all.

So I want to thank all of you for the efforts that are made. But I hope that I'm properly communicating a sense of urgency here. Do not stand by, thinking that somehow, because of what we've done, that it's taken care of. It's not. And if we don't take care of this now, we are going to see a fallout effects and secondary effects from this that will have ramifications for a long time, above and beyond the lives that will have been lost.

I urge all of you, particularly those who have direct access to your heads of state, to make sure that they are making this a top priority in the next several weeks and months.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Margaret Chan, Director-General, World Health Organization; Ella Watson-Stryker, health promoter, Doctors Without Borders' emergency Ebola intervention team in Kailahun, Sierra Leone; and Maj. Gen. Darryl A. Williams, USA, commander, U.S. Army Africa.

Remarks Prior to a Bilateral Meeting With President Abdelfattah Said Elsisi of Egypt in New York City
September 25, 2014

Well, I want to welcome President Elsisi to New York and to the United States. And I'm very much looking forward to this opportunity to share ideas.

Obviously, the U.S.-Egyptian relationship has been an important cornerstone of our security policy and our policy in the Middle East for a very long time. This is our first opportunity, face to face, to discuss a wide range of issues, everything from the Palestinian-Israeli situation in Gaza to Libya, to the issues of ISIL, Iraq, and Syria.

And so I want to welcome the President here and his delegation, and I look forward to a constructive, productive conversation.

Okay. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks on the Resignation of Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr.
September 25, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. Please have a seat. Bobby Kennedy once said, "On this generation of Americans falls the full burden of proving to the world that we really mean it when we say all men are created free and equal before the law."

As one of the longest serving Attorney Generals in American history, Eric Holder has borne that burden. And over the summer, he came to me, and he said he thought 6 years was a pretty good run. I imagine his family agrees. Like me, Eric married up. [*Laughter*] He and his wife, Dr. Sharon Malone, a nationally renowned ob-gyn, have been great friends to Michelle and me for years. And I know Brooke and Maya and Buddy are excited to get their dad back for a while.

So this is bittersweet. But with his typical dedication, Eric has agreed to stay on as Attorney General until I nominate his successor and that successor is confirmed by the Senate, which means, he'll have a chance to add to a proud career of public service, one that began nearly 40 years ago as a young prosecutor in the Department that he now runs.

He was there for 12 years, taking on political corruption until President Reagan named him to the bench as a judge. Later, President

Clinton called him back. So all told, Eric has served at the Justice Department under six Presidents of both parties, including a several-day stint as Acting Attorney General at the start of George W. Bush's first term. And through it all, he's shown a deep and abiding fidelity to one of our most cherished ideals as a people, and that is equal justice under the law.

As younger men, Eric and I both studied law. And I chose him to serve as Attorney General because he believes, as I do, that justice is not just an abstract theory, it's a living and breathing principle. It's about how our laws interact with our daily lives. It's about whether we can make an honest living, whether we can provide for our families, whether we feel safe in our own communities and welcomed in our own country, whether the words that the Founders set to paper 238 years ago apply to every single one of us and not just some.

That's why I made him America's lawyer, the people's lawyer. That comes with a big portfolio, from counterterrorism to civil rights, public corruption to white-collar crime. And alongside the incredible men and women of the Justice Department—men and women that, I promise you, he is proud of and will deeply miss—Eric has done a superb job.

He's worked side by side with our intelligence community and the Department of Homeland Security to keep us safe from terrorist attacks and to counter violent extremism. On his watch, Federal courts have successfully prosecuted hundreds of terror cases, proving that the world's finest justice system is fully capable of delivering justice for the world's most wanted terrorists.

He's rooted out corruption and fought violent crime. Under his watch, a few years ago, the FBI successfully carried out the largest Mafia takedown in American history. He's worked closely with State and local law enforcement officers to make sure that they've got the resources to get the job done. And he's managed funds under the Recovery Act to make sure that when budgets took a hit, thousands of cops were able to stay on the beat nationwide.

He's helped safeguard our markets from manipulation and consumers from financial fraud. Since 2009, the Justice Department has brought more than 60 cases against financial institutions and won some of the largest settlements in history for practices related to the financial crisis, recovering $85 billion, much of it returned to ordinary Americans who were badly hurt.

He's worked passionately to make sure our criminal justice system remains the best in the world. He knows that too many outdated policies, no matter how well-intentioned, perpetuate a destructive cycle in too many communities. So Eric addressed unfair sentencing disparities, reworked mandatory minimums, and promoted alternatives to incarceration. And thanks to his efforts, since I took office, the overall crime rate and the overall incarceration rate have gone down by about 10 percent. That's the first time that they've declined together, at the same time, in more than 40 years.

Eric's proudest achievement, though, might be reinvigorating and restoring the core mission to what he calls "the conscience of the building," and that's the Civil Rights Division. He has been relentless against attacks on the Voting Rights Act, because no citizen, including our servicemembers, should have to jump through hoops to exercise their most fundamental right. He's challenged the discriminatory State immigration laws that not only risked harassment of citizens and legal immigrants, but actually made it harder for law enforcement to do its job.

Under his watch, the Department has brought a record number of prosecutions for human trafficking and for hate crimes, because no one in America should be afraid to walk down the street because of the color of their skin, the love in their heart, the faith they practice, or the disabilities that they live with.

He's dramatically advanced the cause of justice for Native Americans, working closely with their communities. And several years ago, he recommended that our Government stop defending the Defense of Marriage Act, a decision that was vindicated by the Supreme Court

and opened the door to Federal recognition of same-sex marriage and Federal benefits for same-sex couples. It's a pretty good track record.

Eric's father was an immigrant who served in the Army in World War II only to be refused service at lunch counters in the Nation he defended. But he and his wife raised their son to believe that this country's promise was real, and that son grew up to become Attorney General of the United States. And that's something. And that's why Eric's worked so hard—not just in my administration, but for decades—to open up the promise of this country to more striving, dreaming kids like him. To make sure those words—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—are made real for all of us.

So, soon, Eric, Sharon, and their kids will be a bit freer to pursue a little more happiness—[*laughter*]—of their own. And thanks to Eric's efforts, so will more Americans, regardless of race or religion, gender or creed, sexual orientation or disability, who will receive fair and equal treatment under the law.

So I just want to say thank you, Eric. Thank you to the men and women of the Justice Department who work day in and out for the American people. And we could not be more grateful for everything that you've done not just for me and the administration, but for our country.

Attorney General Holder. I come to this moment with very mixed emotions: proud of what the men and women of the Department of Justice have accomplished over the last 6 years and, at the same time, very sad that I will not be a formal part—a formal part—of the great things that this Department and this President will accomplish over the next 2.

I want to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity that you gave me to serve and for giving me the greatest honor of my professional life. We have been great colleagues, but the bonds between us are much deeper than that. In good times and in bad, in things personal and in things professional, you have been there for me. I'm proud to call you my friend.

I'm also grateful for the support you have given me and the Department as we have made real the visions that you and I have always shared. I often think of those early talks between us, about our belief that we might help to craft a more perfect Union. Now, work remains to be done, but our list of accomplishments is real.

Over the last 6 years, our administration—your administration—has made historic gains in realizing the principles of the founding documents and fought to protect the most sacred of American rights: the right to vote.

We have begun to realize the promise of equality for our LGBT brothers and sisters and their families. We have begun to significantly reform our criminal justice system and reconnect those who bravely serve in law enforcement with the communities that they protect.

We have kept faith with our belief in the power of the greatest judicial system the world has ever known to fairly and effectively adjudicate any cases that are brought before it, including those that involve the security of the Nation that we both love so dearly.

We have taken steps to protect the environment and make more fair the rules by which our commercial enterprises operate. And we have held accountable those who would harm the American people, either through violent means or the misuse of economic or political power.

I have loved the Department of Justice ever since, as a young boy, I watched Robert Kennedy prove during the civil rights movement how the Department can and must always be a force for that which is right. I hope that I have done honor to the faith that you have placed in me, Mr. President, and to the legacy of all those who have served before me.

I would also like to thank the Vice President, who I have known for so many years, and in whom I have found great wisdom, unwavering support, and a shared vision of what America can and should be.

I want to recognize my good friend Valerie Jarrett, whom I've been fortunate to work with from the beginning of what started as an improbable, idealistic effort by a young Senator from Illinois, who we were both right to believe would achieve greatness.

I have had the opportunity to serve in your distinguished Cabinet and worked with a White House Chief of Staff—a White House staff ably led by Denis McDonough that has done much to make real the promise of our democracy. And the—each of the men and women who I have come to know will be lifelong friends.

Whatever my accomplishments, they could not have been achieved without the love, support, and guidance of two people who are not here with me today. My parents, Eric and Miriam Holder, nurtured me and my accomplished brother William and made us believe in the value of individual effort and the greatness of this Nation.

My time in public service, which now comes to an end, would not have been possible without the sacrifices, too often unfair, made by the best three kids a father could ask for. Thank you, Maya. Thank you, Brooke. And thank you, Buddy.

And finally, I want to thank the woman who sacrificed the most and allowed me to follow my dreams. She is the foundation of all that our family is and the basis of all that I have become. My wife Sharon is the unsung hero. And she is my life partner. Thank you for all that you have done. I love you.

In the months ahead, I will leave the Department of Justice, but I will never—I will never—leave the work. I will continue to serve and try to find ways to make our Nation even more true to its founding ideals.

I want to thank the dedicated public servants who form the backbone of the United States Department of Justice for their tireless work over the past 6 years, for the efforts they will continue, and for the progress that they made and that will outlast us all.

And I want to thank you all for joining me on a journey that now moves in another direction, but that will always be guided by the pursuit of justice and aimed at the north star.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House.

Remarks at the Global Health Security Agenda Summit
September 26, 2014

Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the White House. Thank you for being here. I want to welcome Members of Congress, leaders from across my administration, and our friends and partners, leaders in public health not just from the United States, but from around the world. Thank you for joining us to advance a cause that touches us all: the health of our people and the security of our nations and of the world.

Today, of course, our thoughts and prayers are with the people of West Africa. And I know that some of you have been there, doing heroic work in the fight against Ebola. You've seen firsthand the tragedy that's taking place. In Liberia, in Sierra Leone, in Guinea, people are terrified. Hospitals, clinics, treatment centers are overwhelmed, leaving people dying on the streets. Public health systems are near collapse. And then, there are the secondary effects: economic growth is slowing dramatically, governments are being strained. And if left unchecked, experts predict that hundreds of thousands of people could be killed in a matter of months.

And that's why I've told my team that fighting this epidemic is a national security priority for the United States. It's why I recently announced a major increase in our efforts. Our military command in Liberia is now up and running. We're standing up an airbridge to move health workers and supplies into West Africa more quickly. We're setting up a field hospital, new treatment units, a facility to train thousands of health workers. So this is an area where the United States has an opportunity to lead, and we've been making a major contribution.

But yesterday, at the United Nations, I joined with Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Dr. Chan and said this has to be a global priority. Over the last week, culminating yes-

terday in New York, more countries and organizations have announced significant commitments, including health care workers and treatment facilities and financial support. And today I want to thank, in particular, the Government of Japan, which has pledged to provide some 500,000 pieces of ventilated protective gear—head gear, gloves, and boots—to help keep health workers safe as they treat patients in the region.

So we've got to now keep up this momentum. This epidemic underscores—vividly and tragically—what we already knew, which is, in a world as interconnected as ours, outbreaks anywhere, even in the most remote villages and the remote corners of the world, have the potential to impact everybody, every nation.

And though this Ebola epidemic is particularly dangerous, we've seen deadly diseases cross borders before: H1N1, SARS, MERS. And each time, the world scrambles to coordinate a response. Each time, it's been harder than it should be to share information and to contain the outbreak. As a result, diseases have spread faster and farther than they should have, which means, lives are lost that could have been saved. With all the knowledge, all the medical talent, all the advanced technologies at our disposable—at our disposal, it is unacceptable if, because of lack of preparedness and planning and global coordination, people are dying when they don't have to. So we have to do better, especially when we know that outbreaks are going to keep happening. That's inevitable.

At the same time, other biological threats have also grown, from infections that are resistant to antibiotics to terrorists that seek to develop and use biological weapons. And no nation can meet these challenges on its own. Nobody is that isolated anymore. Oceans don't protect you. Walls don't protect you. And that means all of us, as nations and as an international community, need to do more to keep our people safe. And that's why we're here.

We have to change our mindsets and start thinking about biological threats as the security threats that they are, in addition to being humanitarian threats and economic threats. We have to bring the same level of commitment and focus to these challenges as we do when meeting around more traditional security issues.

And what I've said about the Ebola epidemic is true here as well: As the nation that has underwritten much of global security for decades, the United States has some capabilities that other nations don't have. We can mobilize the world in ways that other nations may not be able to. And that's what we're trying to do on Ebola. And that's what we'll do on the broader challenge of ensuring our global health security. We will do our part. We will lead. We will put resources. But we cannot do it alone.

And that's why, back in February, before the current Ebola outbreak, we launched this global heath security agenda, and I pushed this agenda at the G–7 meeting, because we could see something like this coming. And we issued a challenge to ourselves and to all nations of the world to make concrete pledges towards three key goals: prevent, detect, and respond. We have to prevent outbreaks by reducing risks. We need to detect threats immediately wherever they arise. And we need to respond rapidly and effectively when we see something happening so that we can save lives and avert even larger outbreaks.

Now, the good news is, today, our nations have begun to answer the call. Together, our countries have made over 100 commitments both to strengthen our own security and to work with each other to strengthen the security of all countries' public health systems. And now we've got to turn those commitments into concrete action, starting in West Africa. We've got to make sure we never see a tragedy on this scale again, and we have to make sure we're not caught flat footed. Because you know better than I do that not only can we anticipate additional outbreaks, but we also know that viruses in large populations have the opportunity to mutate in ways that could make them even more deadly and spread more rapidly.

So first, we'll do more to prevent threats and outbreaks. We're going to partner with countries to help boost immunization rates to stop the spread of preventable diseases. We'll work

together to improve biological security so nations can store, transport, and work with dangerous pathogens safely. Here in the United States, we're working with our partners to find new ways to stop animal diseases from crossing over into people, which, of course, is how Ebola started. And with the Executive order I signed last week, we now have a national strategy to combat antibiotic-resistant bacteria, to better protect our children and grandchildren from the reemergence of diseases and infections that the world conquered decades ago.

Second, we'll do more to detect incidents and outbreaks. We'll help hospitals and health workers find ways to share information more quickly as outbreaks occur. We want to help countries improve their monitoring systems so they can track progress in real time. And we'll intensify our efforts to diagnose diseases faster. And technologies now exist, today, that diagnose many illnesses in minutes. And one of the things that we need to do is work together to find ways to get those new technologies to market as quickly as possible and distributed as quickly as possible.

In too many places around the world, patients still have to wait sometimes for days to find out if they're sick, which means that in the meantime, they're infecting friends, and they're infecting family. We can do better on that. So we're going to keep working to get new technologies to hospitals and health workers who need it so they can diagnose patients quickly and do more to save lives at the earliest stages of disease.

And finally, we'll do more to respond faster when incidents and outbreaks happen. The United States will continue to help countries create their own emergency operations centers, with rapid response teams ready to deploy at a moment's notice. Just like our military conducts exercises to be ready, we'll lead more training exercises as well, helping countries stress-test their system and personnel so that in the event of an outbreak or biological attack, they know how to find the source, they know how to mitigate the impact, they know how to save lives. They can institute best practices that in many advanced countries we take for granted. I mean, the CDC, this is their job. If they find something out, they know how to isolate it rapidly, they know how to conduct the epidemiological studies, and they know what protocols to follow. Every country has the capacity to do that. Because a lot of times, it's not high tech, doesn't require huge resources; it does require planning and preparation.

As we're often seeing in West Africa, often the greatest need in a crisis is personnel who are trained and ready to deploy. So we're going to keep working to strengthen the global networks of experts. When a crisis occurs, there are enough specialists standing by, ready to work.

And today I'm pleased to announce a new effort to help health workers respond to diseases like Ebola. As many of you know firsthand, the protective gear that health workers wear can get incredibly hot, especially in humid environments. So today we're issuing a challenge to inventors and entrepreneurs and businesses of the world to design better protective solutions for our health workers. If you design them, we will make them. We will pay for them. And our goal is to get them to the field in a matter of months to help the people working in West Africa right now. I'm confident we can do this.

So here's the bottom line: No one should ever have to die for lack of an isolation tent or a treatment bed, as is happening in West Africa. No community should be left at the mercy of a horrific disease. No country should be caught by surprise if an outbreak starts to become an epidemic. We've got to act quickly. And we've got to meet the commitments that we're making here today and track our progress and hold each other accountable.

So you can anticipate that I will be bringing this up with the heads of state and government that you report to. I especially want to thank the governments of Finland and Indonesia, who've agreed to lead this effort going forward. I want to thank South Korea, which will host this conference next year. I want to keep the momentum going.

And as we go forward, let's remember what we're working toward: more families, more

communities, more nations that are better able to provide for their own health security. And one thing I want to point out, because all of you have been working in the field for many years and understand these issues far better than I ever will. Even as we are working on preparedness, understand that the U.S. commitment—and hopefully, the world's commitment—to just building a better public health infrastructure generally remains. It's one thing for us to make sure that we can anticipate diseases—identify diseases early and respond to them rapidly and—but as everybody here knows, if the body is strong, if communities are strong, if nations are strong, then their immune systems are a little bit stronger. And so part of what we will also continue to have to do is make sure that children are well fed and that they're getting their immunizations and that people have opportunity to get out of extreme poverty. That's also part of the long-term agenda.

So we have a very narrow, specific issue in terms of how we respond to the potential outbreaks of epidemics like we're seeing in West Africa. I don't want people to think that somehow that distracts us from some of our broader public health goals. But right now what we're focused on today is to make sure that we have the opportunity to succeed in a situation in which success will never actually be seen. It will be the attacks that we prevented and the infections that we stopped before they started and the outbreaks that don't explode into epidemics.

The scenes we're seeing in West Africa are heartbreaking, and they tear at our conscience. But even now, in the face of unimaginable suffering, there's still hope. There's hope in people like Dr. Melvin Korkor from Liberia. I know he shared his story with you earlier here today. I think it's important for the world to hear it, for those of you who are just tuning in.

When the Ebola outbreak first began, in a different part of Liberia from where Dr. Korkor lives, he and his colleagues didn't think they were at risk. So they kept seeing patients, including some with fevers. And as many of you know, one of the tricky things about Ebola is, sometimes, it presents itself early with symptoms that could be malaria or typhoid. So Dr. Korkor and his colleagues didn't have enough latex gloves to use on those illnesses; they saved gloves for things like surgeries. One of those patients turned out to have Ebola. A few nurses got sick. After caring for them, Melvin tested positive as well.

He lay in bed surrounded by other patients, forcing himself to eat and drink even though he had no appetite, watching others die. He fought off despair by reading his Bible and tried to stay calm. And he says, as he describes it, "I said to myself I was going to make it." "I said to myself I was going to make it." And the days passed. Doctors and nurses gave him the best comfort and care that they could, and Melvin pulled through. He survived. And he says, "It was like being reborn." And now, nearly 2 months after being declared disease free, he's counting down the days until his hospital reopens and he can get back to work in just a few weeks.

So, Melvin, your story reminds us that this virus can be beaten, because there are strong people, determined people in these countries who are prepared to do what it takes to save their friends and countrymen and families. But they need a little help.

At this very moment, there are thousands of health workers like Dr. Korkor in West Africa—on the ground, in cities, neighborhoods, and remote villages—doing everything they can to stop this virus, whatever it takes. And we have the tools to help them, to save lives. We have the knowledge and resources, not just to stop this outbreak, but to prevent something like this from happening again.

It is our moral obligation, and it is in our national self-interests to see this work through, to help them, to help ourselves; the commitment to make sure our Nation and our world is more secure; and the determination to work together to protect the lives of people. We have to be as strong and as determined and as driven as Melvin.

Thank you all for being part of this critical work. The United States is proud to be your partner. I'm looking forward to making sure that all these experts here get the support that

they need from their leadership. And hopefully, as a consequence of meetings like this translated into action, we'll be savings lives for many years to come.

All right. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Margaret Chan, Director-General, World Health Organization; and Melvin Korkor, physician, Phebe Hospital in Bong County, Liberia. He also referred to Executive Order 13676, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the End of Anders Fogh Rasmussen's Term as Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
September 26, 2014

Today marks the end of Anders Fogh Rasmussen's term as Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As Secretary General, he has been a dedicated leader and tireless advocate for the importance of the transatlantic alliance as the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic relations and security. Under his leadership, NATO allies have worked together to address a wide range of security challenges, from continuing our work in Afghanistan and the Balkans to leading the international effort in Libya. In the final year of his tenure, his leadership has been critical in guiding NATO's response to unexpected and serious challenges posed to our common security by Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine and the growing threat of ISIL in the Middle East. Secretary General Rasmussen's strategic vision for the alliance has helped guarantee our readiness to meet any threat, and our alliance is stronger because of his leadership.

Anders brought a deep personal commitment to assuring a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace, based upon his unwavering commitment to the shared common values that bind us as allies: freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and the dignity of the individual. So, as he leaves his post today for the last time, we express our gratitude for his friendship and selfless service to NATO, a sentiment I know is shared deeply on both sides of the Atlantic.

As Secretary General Rasmussen's term comes to an end, we warmly welcome his successor, former Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg. Secretary General Stoltenberg will bring energy, experience, and a keen understanding of the importance of defending our values and maintaining our commitments to each other's security, and I look forward to working with him to address the new and emerging challenges we face as an alliance.

Memorandum on Deferred Enforced Departure for Liberians
September 26, 2014

Memorandum for the Secretary of Homeland Security

Subject: Deferred Enforced Departure for Liberians

Since 1991, the United States has provided safe haven for Liberians who were forced to flee their country as a result of armed conflict and widespread civil strife, in part through granting Temporary Protected Status (TPS). The armed conflict ended in 2003 and conditions improved such that TPS ended effective October 1, 2007. President Bush then deferred the enforced departure of the Liberians originally granted TPS. I extended that grant of Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) to September 30, 2014. I have determined that there are compelling foreign policy reasons to again extend DED to those Liberians presently resid-

ing in the United States under the existing grant of DED.

Pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States, I have determined that it is in the foreign policy interest of the United States to defer for 24 months the removal of any Liberian national, or person without nationality who last habitually resided in Liberia, who is present in the United States and who is under a grant of DED as of September 30, 2011. The grant of DED only applies to an individual who has continuously resided in the United States since October 1, 2002, except for Liberian nationals, or persons without nationality who last habitually resided in Liberia:

(1) Who are ineligible for TPS for the reasons provided in section 244(c)(2)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)(2)(B);
(2) Whose removal you determine is in the interest of the United States;
(3) Whose presence or activities in the United States the Secretary of State has reasonable grounds to believe would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States;
(4) Who have voluntarily returned to Liberia or his or her country of last habitual residence outside the United States;
(5) Who were deported, excluded, or removed prior to the date of this memorandum; or
(6) Who are subject to extradition.

Accordingly, I direct you to take the necessary steps to implement for eligible Liberians:

(1) A deferral of enforced departure from the United States for 24 months from October 1, 2014; and
(2) Authorization for employment for 24 months from October 1, 2014.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: The memorandum referred to former President George W. Bush.

The President's Weekly Address
September 27, 2014

Hi, everybody. American leadership is the one constant in an uncertain world. That was true this week, as we mobilized the world to confront some of our most urgent challenges.

America is leading the world in the fight to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL. On Monday, our brave men and women in uniform began air strikes against ISIL targets in Syria. And they weren't alone. I made it clear that America would act as part of a broad coalition, and we were joined in this action by friends and partners, including Arab nations. At the United Nations in New York, I worked to build more support for this coalition, to cut off terrorist financing, and to stop the flow of foreign fighters into and out of that region. And in my address to the U.N., I challenged the world—especially Muslim communities—to reject the ideology of violent extremism and to do more to tap the extraordinary potential of their young people.

America is leading the effort to rally the world against Russian aggression in Ukraine. Along with our allies, we will support the people of Ukraine as they develop their democracy and economy. And this week, I called upon even more nations to join us on the right side of history.

America is leading the fight to contain and combat the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. We're deploying our doctors and scientists, supported by our military, to help corral the outbreak and pursue new treatments. From the United Kingdom and Germany to France and Senegal, other nations are stepping up their efforts too, sending money, supplies, and personnel. And we will continue to rally other countries to join us in making concrete commitments to fight this disease and enhance global health security for the long term.

America is engaging more partners and allies to confront the growing threat of climate change before it's too late. We're doing our part and helping developing nations do theirs. At home, we've invested in clean energy, cut carbon pollution, and created new jobs in the process. Abroad, our climate assistance now reaches more than 120 nations. And on Tuesday, I called on every nation—developed and developing alike—to join us in this effort for the sake of future generations.

The people of the world look to us to lead. And we welcome that responsibility. We are heirs to a proud legacy of freedom. And as we showed the world this week, we are prepared to do what is necessary to secure that legacy for generations to come.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:55 p.m. on September 26 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on September 27. In the address, the President referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 26, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 27.

Remarks at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Phoenix Awards Dinner

September 27, 2014

Hello, CBC! Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. It is good to be with you here tonight. If it wasn't black tie, I would have worn my tan suit. [*Laughter*] I thought it looked good. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Chaka, for that introduction. Thanks to all of you for having me here this evening. I want to acknowledge the members of the Congressional Black Caucus and Chairwoman Marcia Fudge for their outstanding work. Thank you, Shuanise Washington, and the CBC Foundation for doing so much to help our young people aim high and reach their potential.

Tonight I want to begin by paying special tribute to a man with whom all of you have worked closely with; someone who served his country for nearly 40 years as a prosecutor, as a judge, and as Attorney General of the United States: Mr. Eric Holder. Throughout his long career in public service, Eric has built a powerful legacy of making sure that equal justice under the law actually means something, that it applies to everybody, regardless of race or gender or religion or color, creed, disability, sexual orientation. He has been a great friend of mine. He has been a faithful servant of the American people. We will miss him badly.

This year, we've been marking the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. We honor giants like John Lewis, unsung heroines like Evelyn Lowery. We honor the countless Americans, some who are in this room—Black, White, students, scholars, preachers, housekeepers—patriots all, who, with their bare hands, reached into the well of our Nation's founding ideals and helped to nurture a more perfect Union. We've reminded ourselves that progress is not just absorbing what has been done, it's advancing what's left undone.

Even before President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law, even as the debate dragged on in the Senate, he was already challenging America to do more and march further, to build a Great Society; one, Johnson said, "where no child will go unfed, and no youngster will go unschooled. Where no man who wants work will fail to find it. Where no citizen will be barred from any door because of his birthplace or his color or his church. Where peace and security is common among neighbors and possible among nations." "This is the world that waits for you," he said. "Reach out for it now. Join the fight to finish the unfinished work." To finish the unfinished work.

America has made stunning progress since that time, over the past 50 years, even over the

past 5 years. But it is the unfinished work that drives us forward.

Some of our unfinished work lies beyond our borders. America is leading the effort to rally the world against Russian aggression in Ukraine. America is leading the fight to contain and combat Ebola in Africa. America is building and leading the coalition that will degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL. As Americans, we are leading, and we don't shy away from these responsibilities, we welcome them. That's what America does. And we are grateful to the men and women in uniform who put themselves in harm's way in service of the country that we all love.

So we've got unfinished work overseas, but we've got some unfinished work right here at home. After the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, our businesses have now created 10 million new jobs over the last 54 months. This is the longest uninterrupted stretch of job growth in our history. [*Applause*] In our history. But we understand our work is not done until we get the kind of job creation that means everybody who wants work can a find job.

We've done some work on health care too. I don't know if you've noticed. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, we've seen a 26-percent decline in the uninsured rate in America. African Americans have seen a 30-percent decline. And by the way, the cost of health care isn't going up as fast anymore either. Everybody was predicting this was all going to be so expensive. We've saved $800 billion in Medicare because of the work that we've done, slowing the cost, improving quality and improving access. Despite unyielding opposition, this change has happened just in the last couple of years.

But we know our work is not yet done until we get into more communities, help more uninsured folks get covered, especially in those States where the Governors aren't being quite as cooperative as we'd like them to be. You know who you are. It always puzzles me where you decide to take a stand to make sure poor folks in your State can't get health insurance even though it doesn't cost you a dime. That doesn't make much sense to me, but I won't go on on that topic. We've got more work to do.

It's easy to take a stand when you've got health insurance. [*Laughter*] I'm going off script now, but—[*laughter*]—that's what happens at the CBC.

Our high school graduation rate is at a record high, the dropout rate is falling, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before. Last year, the number of children living in poverty fell by 1.4 million, the largest decline since 1966. Since I took office, the overall crime rate and the overall incarceration rate has gone down by about 10 percent. That's the first time they've declined at the same time in more than 40 years. Fewer folks in jail. Crime still going down.

But our work is not done when too many children live in crumbling neighborhoods, cycling through substandard schools, traumatized by daily violence. Our work is not done when working Americans of all races have seen their wages and incomes stagnate, even as corporate profits soar; when African American unemployment is still twice as high as White unemployment; when income inequality, on the rise for decades, continues to hold back hard-working communities, especially communities of color. We've got unfinished work. And we know what to do. That's the worst part, we know what to do.

We know we've got to invest in infrastructure and manufacturing and research and development that creates new jobs. We've got to keep rebuilding a middle class economy with ladders of opportunity so that hard work pays off and you see higher wages and higher incomes and fair pay for women doing the same work as men and workplace flexibility for parents in case a child gets sick or a parent needs some help. We've got to build more Promise Zones partnerships to support local revitalization of hard-hit communities. We've got to keep investing in early childhood education. We want to bring preschool to every 4-year-old in this country. And we want every child to have an excellent teacher. And we want to invest in our community colleges and expand Pell grants for more students. And I'm going to

keep working with you to make college more affordable. Because every child in America, no matter who she is, no matter where she's born, no matter how much money her parents have, ought to be able to fulfill her God-given potential. That's what we believe.

So I just want everybody to understand, we have made enormous progress. There's almost no economic measure by which we are not better off than when I took office. Unemployment down. Deficits down. Uninsured down. Poverty down. Energy production up. Manufacturing back. Auto industry back. But—and I just list these things just so if you have a discussion with one of your friends—[*laughter*]—and they're confused. Stock market up. Corporate balance sheet strong. Hey, in fact, the folks who are doing the best, they're the ones who complain the most. [*Laughter*] So you can just point these things out.

But we still have to close these opportunity gaps. And we have to close the justice gap: how justice is applied, but also how it is perceived, how it is experienced. Eric Holder understands this. That's what we saw in Ferguson this summer, when Michael Brown was killed and a community was divided. We know that the unrest continues. And Eric spent some time with the residents and police of Ferguson, and the Department of Justice has indicated that its civil rights investigation is ongoing.

Now, I won't comment on the investigation. I know that Michael's family is here tonight. I know that nothing any of us can say can ease the grief of losing a child so soon. But the anger and the emotion that followed his death awakened our Nation once again to the reality that people in this room have long understood, which is, in too many communities around the country, a gulf of mistrust exists between local residents and law enforcement.

Too many young men of color feel targeted by law enforcement, guilty of walking while Black or driving while Black, judged by stereotypes that fuel fear and resentment and hopelessness. We know that, statistically, in everything from enforcing drug policy to applying the death penalty, to pulling people over, there are significant racial disparities. That's just the statistics. One recent poll showed that the majority of Americans think the criminal justice system doesn't treat people of all races equally. Think about that. That's not just Blacks, not just Latinos or Asians or Native Americans saying things may not be fair. That's most Americans.

And that has a corrosive effect, not just on the Black community; it has a corrosive effect on America. It harms the communities that need law enforcement the most. It makes folks who are victimized by crime and need strong policing reluctant to go to the police because they may not trust them. And the worst part of it is, it scars the hearts of our children. It scars the hearts of White children who grow unnecessarily fearful of somebody who doesn't look like them. It stains the heart of Black children who feel as if no matter what he does, he'll always be under suspicion. That is not the society we want. It's not the society that our children deserve. Whether you're Black or White, you don't want that for America.

It was interesting, Ferguson was used by some of America's enemies and critics to deflect attention from their own shortcomings overseas, to undermine our efforts to promote justice around the world. They said, well, look at what's happened to you back home.

But as I said this week at the United Nations, America is special not because we're perfect; America is special because we work to address our problems, to make our Union more perfect. We fight for more justice. We fight to cure what ails us. We fight for our ideals, and we're willing to criticize ourselves when we fall short. And we address our differences in the open space of democracy, with respect for the rule of law, with a place for people of every race and religion, and with an unyielding belief that people who love their country can change it. That's what makes us special, not because we don't have problems, but because we work to fix them. And we will continue to work to fix this.

And to that end, we need to help communities and law enforcement build trust, build understanding, so that our neighborhoods stay safe and our young people stay on track. And

under the leadership of Attorney General Eric Holder, the Justice Department has launched a national effort to do just that. He's also been working to make the criminal justice system smarter and more effective by addressing unfair sentencing disparities, changing Department policies on charging mandatory minimums, promoting stronger reentry programs for those who have paid their debt to society.

And we need to address the unique challenges that make it hard for some of our young people to thrive. For all the success stories that exist in a room like this one, we all know relatives, classmates, neighbors who were just as smart as we were, just as capable as we were, born with the same light behind their eyes, the same joy, the same curiosity about the world, but somehow, they didn't get the support they needed or the encouragement they needed, or they made a mistake, or they missed an opportunity; they weren't able to overcome the obstacles that they faced.

And so, in February, we launched "My Brother's Keeper." And I was the first one to acknowledge, government can't play the only, or even the primary, role in the lives of our children. But what we can do is bring folks together, and that's what we're doing—philanthropies, business leaders, entrepreneurs, faith leaders, mayors, educators, athletes, and the youth themselves—to examine how can we ensure that our young men have the tools they need to achieve their full potential.

And next week, I'm launching "My Brother's Keeper" Community Challenge, asking every community in the country—big cities and small towns, rural counties, tribal nations—publicly commit to implementing strategies that will ensure all young people can succeed, starting from cradle, all the way to college and a career. It's a challenge to local leaders to follow the evidence and use the resources on what works for our kids. And we've already got a hundred mayors, county officials, tribal leaders, Democrats, Republicans signed on. And we're going to keep on signing them up in the coming weeks and months. But they're going to need you—elected leaders, business leaders, community leaders—to make this effort successful. We need all of us to come together to help all of our young people address the variety of challenges they face.

And we're not forgetting about the girls, by the way. I've got two daughters, I don't know if you noticed. [*Laughter*] African American girls are more likely than their White peers also to be suspended, incarcerated, physically harassed. Black women struggle every day with biases that perpetuate oppressive standards for how they're supposed to look and how they're supposed to act. Too often, they're either left under the hard light of scrutiny or cloaked in a kind of invisibility.

So, in addition to the new efforts on "My Brother's Keeper," the White House Council for Women and Girls has for years been working on issues affecting women and girls of color, from violence against women to pay equity, to access to health care. And you know Michelle has been working on that, because she doesn't think our daughters should be treated differently than anybody else's sons. I've got a vested interest in making sure that our daughters have the same opportunities as boys do.

So that's the world we've got to reach for—the world where every single one of our children has the opportunity to pursue their measure of happiness. That's our unfinished work. And we're going to have to fight for it. We've got to stand up for it. And we have to vote for it. [*Applause*] We have to vote for it.

All around the country, wherever I see folks, they always say: "Oh, Barack, we're praying for you. Boy, you're so gray. Look, you've got all gray haired; you're looking tired." [*Laughter*] "We're praying for you." Which I appreciate. [*Laughter*] But I tell them, after President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, he immediately moved on to what he called "the meat in the coconut," a Voting Rights Act bill. And some of his administration argued that's too much, it's too soon. Movement know—but the movement knew that if we rested after the Civil Rights Act, then all we could do was pray that somebody would enforce those rights.

So, whenever I hear somebody say they're praying for me, I say thank you. Thank you. I believe in the power of prayer. But we need

more than prayer. We need to vote. [*Applause*] We need to vote. That will be helpful. It will not relieve me of my gray hair, but it will help me pass some bills. [*Laughter*]

Because people refused to give in when it was hard, we get to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act next year. Until then, we've got to protect it. We can't just celebrate it, we've got to protect it. Because there are people still trying to pass voter ID laws to make it harder for folks to vote. And we've got to get back to our schools and our offices and our churches, our beauty shops, barber shops, and make sure folks know there's an election coming up, they need to know how to register, and they need to know how and when to vote.

We've got to tell them to push back against the cynics, prove everybody wrong who says that change isn't possible. Cynicism does not fix anything. Cynicism is very popular in America sometimes. It's propagated in the media. But cynicism didn't put anybody on the Moon. Cynicism didn't pass the Voting Rights Act. Hope is what packed buses full of freedom riders. Hope is what led thousands of Black folks and White folks to march from Selma to Montgomery. Hope is what got John Lewis off his back after being beaten within an inch of his life and chose to keep on going.

Cynicism is a choice, but hope is a better choice. And our job right now is to convince the people we're privileged to represent to join us in finishing that fight that folks like John started. Get those souls to the polls. Exercise their right to vote. And if we do, then I guarantee you we've got a brighter future ahead.

Thank you, God bless you. Keep praying. But go out there and vote. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 p.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to A. Shuanise Washington, president and chief executive officer, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India—Vision Statement for the United States-India Strategic Partnership: "*Chalein Saath Saath:* Forward Together We Go"

September 29, 2014

Chalein Saath Saath, forward together we go. As leaders of two great democratic nations with diverse traditions and faiths, we share a vision for a partnership in which the United States and India work together, not just for the benefit of both our nations, but for the benefit of the world.

We have vastly different histories, but both our founders sought to guarantee freedoms that allow our citizens to determine their own destiny and pursue their personal aspirations. Our strategic partnership rests on our shared mission to provide equal opportunity for our people through democracy and freedom.

The currents of kinship and commerce, scholarship and science tie our countries together. They allow us to rise above differences by maintaining the long-term perspective. Every day, in myriad ways, our cooperation fortifies a relationship that matches the innumerable ties between our peoples, who have produced works of art and music, invented cutting-edge technology, and responded to crises across the globe.

Our strategic partnership is a joint endeavor for prosperity and peace. Through intense consultations, joint exercises, and shared technology, our security cooperation will make the region and the world safe and secure. Together, we will combat terrorist threats and keep our homelands and citizens safe from attacks, while we respond expeditiously to humanitarian disasters and crises. We will prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and remain committed to reducing the salience of nuclear weapons, while promoting universal, verifiable, and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

We will support an open and inclusive rules-based global order, in which India assumes greater multilateral responsibility, including in a reformed United Nations Security Council. At the United Nations and beyond, our close coordination will lead to a more secure and just world.

Climate change threatens both our countries, and we will join together to mitigate its impact and adapt to our changing environment. We will address the consequences of unchecked pollution through cooperation by our governments, science and academic communities. We will partner to ensure that both countries have affordable, clean, reliable, and diverse sources of energy, including through our efforts to bring American-origin nuclear power technologies to India.

We will ensure that economic growth in both countries brings better livelihoods and welfare for all of our people. Our citizens value education as a means to a better life, and our exchange of skills and knowledge will propel our countries forward. Even the poorest will share in the opportunities in both our countries.

Joint research and collaboration in every aspect—ranging from particles of creation to outer space—will produce boundless innovation and high technology collaboration that changes our lives. Open markets, fair and transparent practices will allow trade in goods and services to flourish.

Our people will be healthier as we jointly counter infectious diseases, eliminate maternal and child deaths, and work to eradicate poverty for all. And they will be safer as we ensure the fullest empowerment of women in a secure environment.

The United States and India commit to expand and deepen our strategic partnership in order to harness the inherent potential of our two democracies and the burgeoning ties between our people, economies, and businesses. Together we seek a reliable and enduring friendship that bolsters security and stability, contributes to the global economy, and advances peace and prosperity for our citizens and throughout the world.

We have a vision that the United States and India will have a transformative relationship as trusted partners in the 21st century. Our partnership will be a model for the rest of the world.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India
September 30, 2014

President Obama. It is an extraordinary pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Modi to the White House for the first time. I think that the entire world has watched the historic election and mandate that the people of India delivered in the recent election. And I think everyone has been impressed with the energy and the determination with which the Prime Minister has looked to address not only India's significant challenges, but more importantly, India's enormous opportunities for success in the 21st century.

We have had an outstanding discussion around a range of issues. And we, during our discussions, reaffirmed that as two of the world's largest democracies—vibrant people-to-people contacts between India and the United States, including an incredible Indian American population that contributes so much—that we have so much in common, it is critical for us to continue to deepen and broaden the existing framework of partnership and friendship that already exists.

Last night, during a private dinner, we spent most of our time talking about the economy. And we agreed that in both countries, one of our primary goals is to improve education and job training so that our young people can compete in the global marketplace, and the Prime Minister shared with me his vision for lifting what is still too many Indians who are

locked in poverty into a situation in which their lives can improve.

We also today spent time talking about the international situation and security issues. We addressed challenges in the Middle East and violent extremism and the fight against ISIL. We discussed what has now been a successful, peaceful transition of power in Afghanistan and the need for all of us to work together to ensure that there is stability there.

We discussed issues of trade, issues of making sure that maritime rules are observed. And we discussed how we can continue to work together on a whole host of issues from space exploration and scientific endeavor to dealing with humanitarian crises like Ebola in West Africa.

And throughout this conversation, I've been impressed with the Prime Minister's interest in not only addressing the needs of the poorest of the poor in India and revitalizing the economy there, but also his determination to make sure that India is serving as a major power that could help bring about peace and security for the entire world.

So I want to wish him luck in what I'm sure will be a challenging, but always interesting, tenure as Prime Minister in India. I'm very grateful for the friendship between the United States and India, and I'm looking forward to building on this meeting so that we can continue to promote progress in both countries and around the world.

So thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Modi. Thank you. President Obama, members of the media: First, I want to thank President Obama for his invitation and his warm and generous hospitality. I am pleased to visit U.S.A. and meet President Obama at the start of my tenure.

I am happy that we are meeting here just a few days after the Indian and the U.S. missions reached Mars around the same time. So, after the India-U.S. summit on Mars, we are meeting here on Earth. [*Laughter*] This happy coincidence captures the potential of our relationship.

This visit, especially my conversation with President Obama, has reinforced my conviction that India and the United States are natural global partners based on our shared values, interests, and strengths in the digital age. We already have the foundation of a strong partnership. We now have to revive the momentum and ensure that we get the best out of it for our people and for the world.

The President and I spoke about many of our common economic priorities. I'm confident that India will see rapid economic growth and transformation. We are focusing in India on not just on policies, but also on processes to make it easy and productive to do business in India. I believe that India-U.S. economic partnership will also grow rapidly in coming years.

I also sought President Obama's support for continued openness and ease of access by Indian service companies in the U.S. market. We are serious about resolution of issues on both sides to enable civilian nuclear energy cooperation to take off. It is important for India's energy security.

We had a candid discussion on Bali ministerial of the WTO. India supports trade facilitation. However, I also expect that we are able to find a solution that takes care of our concern on food security. I believe that it should be possible to do that soon.

We have agreed to consult and cooperate closely on climate change issues, an area of strong priority for both of us. There was great convergence on international developments that matter the most to our two countries, including peace and stability in Asia-Pacific region. The United States is intrinsic to our "Look East" and "Link West" policies.

We discussed existing terrorism challenges, including in South Asia and the new threats of terrorism in West Asia and beyond. We agreed to intensify our counterterrorism and intelligence cooperation. The Afghan people have shown the will to prevail over violence and extremism. We discussed our two countries' continued commitment to assist Afghanistan and our own coordination in this area.

We have shared concern on the Ebola crisis in Africa, for which India has already made fi-

nancial commitments of 12 million U.S. dollars.

Given our broad range of shared interests, we will also continue to deepen our security dialogue and defense relations. I want to especially welcome the U.S. defense companies to participate in developing the Indian defense industry.

During the last 4 days in the U.S., I have seen extraordinary interest and excitement about India and India-U.S. partnership among the people of our two countries. We will draw strength and inspiration from it as we start a more purposeful course in our ongoing journey.

I look forward to receiving President Obama and his family in India at a convenient time. I once again thank President Obama, the people of the United States, and especially the Indian American community for their warm welcome and hospitality.

President Obama. Excellent.

Prime Minister Modi. And also, I should thank the media from India and the U.S.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Prime Minister Modi spoke in Hindi, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India

September 30, 2014

The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and the President of the United States of America Barack Obama met this morning. Marking their first bilateral summit, the President recognized the Prime Minister's historic election victory in the largest democratic election ever held.

The two leaders extolled the broad strategic and global partnership between the United States and India, which will continue to generate greater prosperity and security for their citizens and the world. Prime Minister Modi emphasized the priority India accords to its partnership with the United States, a principal partner in the realization of India's rise as a responsible, influential world power. Given the shared values, people-to-people ties, and pluralistic traditions, President Obama recognized that India's rise as a friend and partner is in the United States' interest. They endorsed the first "Vision Statement for the Strategic Partnership" as a guide to strengthen and deepen cooperation in every sector for the benefit of global stability and people's livelihoods over the next ten years. They committed to a new mantra for the relationship, "Chalein Saath Saath: Forward Together We Go."

The two leaders recognized that the bilateral relationship enjoys strong support in both countries, which has allowed the strategic partnership to flourish even as the governments change. Welcoming the wide range of collaborative activities undertaken to improve their citizens' lives, both leaders agreed to revitalize the existing partnership and find new areas for collaboration and mutual benefit.

Economic Growth

Noting that two-way trade has increased fivefold since 2001 to nearly $100 billion, President Obama and Prime Minister Modi committed to facilitate the actions necessary to increase trade another fivefold. President Obama and Prime Minister Modi recognized that U.S. and Indian businesses have a critical role to play in sustainable, inclusive, and job-led growth and development.

In order to raise investment by institutional investors and corporate entities, the leaders pledged to establish an Indo-U.S. Investment Initiative led by the Ministry of Finance and the Department of Treasury, with special focus on capital market development and financing of infrastructure. They pledged to establish an

Infrastructure Collaboration Platform convened by the Ministry of Finance and the Department of Commerce to enhance participation of U.S. companies in infrastructure projects in India.

In this context, the U.S. government welcomes India's offer for U.S. industry to be the lead partner in developing smart cities in Ajmer (Rajasthan), Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) and Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh). The Prime Minister will welcome two trade missions in 2015 focused on meeting India's infrastructure needs with U.S. technology and services.

They also committed to a new partnership to advance the Prime Minister's goal of improved access to clean water and sanitation for all. USAID, through the Urban India Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Alliance, will serve as knowledge partner to help leverage private and civil society innovation, expertise, and technology, such as with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to support the Prime Minister's 500 Cities National Urban Development Mission and Clean India Campaign.

The President welcomed the Prime Minister's ambitious plan to extend basic financial services to all its citizens, giving them powerful tools to manage their finances and more fully participate in India's growing economy. The President and Prime Minister underlined the important contribution that U.S. locomotive technology, equipment to monitor rail system assets, and U.S. best practices can play in modernizing India's vast railway network, including accessing programs of U.S. Trade and Development Agency in this work.

The leaders discussed their concerns about the current impasse in the World Trade Organization and its effect on the multilateral trading system, and directed their officials to consult urgently along with other WTO members on the next steps. The leaders committed to work through the Trade Policy Forum to promote a business environment attractive for companies to invest and manufacture in India and in the United States. Agreeing on the need to foster innovation in a manner that promotes economic growth and job creation, the leaders committed to establish an annual high-level Intellectual Property (IP) Working Group with appropriate decision-making and technical-level meetings as part of the Trade Policy Forum. They recognized in particular the contribution of the Indian and U.S. Information Technology (IT) industry and the IT-enabled service industry in strengthening India-U.S. trade and investment relations.

The two leaders committed to hold public-private discussions in early 2015 under the Commercial Dialogue on new areas of cooperation, including innovation in advanced manufacturing. In order to share best practices in manufacturing and work toward greater harmonization of standards, the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership program will start a dialogue with Indian counterparts. The two countries plan to work expeditiously through several joint initiatives to facilitate greater confidence in cross-border trade and investment.

The President also offered to support the Prime Minister to achieve his goal of preparing young Indians for 21st century jobs through new partnerships to share expertise and global standards for skills development in India, including by reinvigorating the Higher Education Dialogue.

The leaders look forward to the annual U.S.-India Economic and Financial Partnership in early 2015. They also welcomed the expansion of the partnership in oversight of financial institutions, including between Reserve Bank of India and the U.S. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Office of the Comptroller of Currency. They also agreed to reinvigorate the India-U.S. CEO Forum, and welcomed India's offer to host the Forum for the second time in early 2015.

Energy and Climate Change

The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to implement fully the U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement. They established a Contact Group on advancing the implementation of civil nuclear energy cooperation in order to realize early their shared goal

of delivering electricity from U.S.-built nuclear power plants in India. They looked forward to advancing the dialogue to discuss all implementation issues, including but not limited to administrative issues, liability, technical issues, and licensing to facilitate the establishment of nuclear parks, including power plants with Westinghouse and GE-Hitachi technology.

Recognizing the critical importance of increasing energy access, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and improving resilience in the face of climate change, President Obama and Prime Minister Modi agreed to a new and enhanced strategic partnership on energy security, clean energy, and climate change. They agreed to strengthen and expand the highly successful U.S.-India Partnership to Advance Clean Energy (PACE) through a series of priority initiatives, including a new Energy Smart Cities Partnership to promote efficient urban energy infrastructure; a new program to scale-up renewable energy integration into India's power grid; cooperation to support India's efforts to upgrade its alternative energy institutes and to develop new innovation centers; an expansion of the Promoting Energy Access through Clean Energy (PEACE) program to unlock additional private sector investment and accelerate the deployment of cost-effective, super-efficient appliances; and the formation of a new Clean Energy Finance Forum to promote investment and trade in clean energy projects.

Both leaders are committed to working towards a successful outcome in Paris in 2015 of the conference of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including the creation of a new global agreement on climate change.

The leaders recalled previous bilateral and multilateral statements on the phase-down of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). They recognized the need to use the institutions and expertise of the Montreal Protocol to reduce consumption and production of HFCs, while continuing to report and account for the quantities reduced under the UNFCCC. They pledged to urgently arrange a meeting of their bilateral task force on HFCs prior to the next meeting of the Montreal Protocol to discuss issues such as safety, cost, and commercial access to new or alternative technologies to replace HFCs. The two sides would thereafter cooperate on next steps to tackle the challenge posed by HFCs to global warming.

They launched a new U.S.-India Partnership for Climate Resilience to advance capacity for climate adaptation planning, and a new program of work on air quality aimed at delivering benefits for climate change and human health.

They also launched a new U.S.-India Climate Fellowship Program to build long-term capacity to address climate change-related issues in both countries. The President and Prime Minister instructed their senior officials to work through the U.S.-India Energy Dialogue, U.S.-India Joint Working Group on Combating Climate Change, and other relevant fora to advance these and other initiatives.

The leaders welcomed the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Export-Import Bank and the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency, which would make up to $1 billion in financing available to bolster India's efforts to transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient energy economy, while boosting U.S. renewable energy exports to India. The two leaders reiterated the importance of conserving India's precious biodiversity and agreed to explore opportunities for collaboration on national parks and wildlife conservation.

Defense and Homeland Security Cooperation

The Prime Minister and the President stated their intention to expand defense cooperation to bolster national, regional, and global security. The two leaders reaffirmed that India and the United States would build an enduring partnership in which both sides treat each other at the same level as their closest partners, including defense technology transfers, trade, research, co-production, and co-development.

To facilitate deeper defense cooperation, they welcomed the decision to renew for ten more years the 2005 Framework for the U.S.-India Defense Relationship and directed their defense teams to develop plans for more ambi-

tious programs and activities. The two leaders also agreed to reinvigorate the Political-Military Dialogue and expand its role to serve as a wider dialogue on export licensing, defense cooperation and strategic cooperation.

The leaders welcomed the first meeting under the framework of the Defense Trade and Technology Initiative in September 2014 and endorsed its decision to establish a Task Force to expeditiously evaluate and decide on unique projects and technologies which would have a transformative impact on bilateral defense relations and enhance India's defense industry and military capabilities.

The President and Prime Minister welcomed cooperation in the area of military education and training, and endorsed plans for the United States to cooperate with India's planned National Defence University. They also decided to expand military-to-military partnerships including expert exchanges, dialogues, and joint training and exercises. They also committed to enhancing exchanges of civilian and military intelligence and consultation.

The leaders agreed to intensify cooperation in maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and unimpeded movement of lawful shipping and commercial activity, in accordance with accepted principles of international law. To achieve this objective, the two sides considered enhancing technology partnerships for India's Navy including assessing possible areas of technology cooperation. They also agreed to upgrade their existing bilateral exercise MALABAR.

The leaders reaffirmed their deep concern over the continued threat posed by terrorism, most recently highlighted by the dangers presented by the ISIL, and underlined the need for continued comprehensive global efforts to combat and defeat terrorism. The leaders stressed the need for joint and concerted efforts, including the dismantling of safe havens for terrorist and criminal networks, to disrupt all financial and tactical support for networks such as Al Qaeda, Lashkar-e Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, the D-Company, and the Haqqanis. They reiterated their call for Pakistan to bring the perpetrators of the November 2008 terrorist attack in Mumbai to justice.

They pledged to enhance criminal law enforcement, security, and military information exchanges, and strengthen cooperation on extradition and mutual legal assistance. Through operational cooperation through their law enforcement agencies, they aimed to prevent the spread of counterfeit currency and inhibit the use of cyberspace by terrorists, criminals, and those who use the internet for unlawful purposes, and to facilitate investigation of criminal and terrorist activities. The leaders also committed to identify modalities to exchange terrorist watch lists. President Obama pledged to help India counter the threat of improvised explosive devices with information and technology. The leaders committed to pursue provision of U.S.-made mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles to India.

The President and Prime Minister looked forward to easing travel between their two countries, as India introduces visa-on-arrival for U.S. citizens in 2015 and works toward meeting the requirements to make the United States' Global Entry Program available to Indian citizens.

High Technology, Space and Health Cooperation

Fundamental science and high technology cooperation has been a critical pillar of the strategic partnership, the two leaders confirmed, and they looked forward to renewing the Science and Technology Agreement in order to expand joint activities in innovative technology. The Prime Minister welcomed the United States as a partner country, for the first time, at India's annual Technology Summit in November 2014. In addition, they committed to convene the ninth High Technology Cooperation Group (HTCG). They plan to launch new partnerships to source and scale innovation for the benefit of citizens in both countries and to harness innovation to solve global development challenges.

The President welcomed India's contribution and cooperation on high-energy physics and accelerator research and development

with the U.S. Department of Energy. The President thanked the Prime Minister for his offer to have U.S. institutions partner with a new Indian Institute of Technology.

The leaders committed to partner on the Digital India initiative, with the goal of enhancing digital infrastructure, deploying e-governance and e-services, promoting industry collaboration, and digitally empowering India's citizens. The President welcomed India's proposal to establish the Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN, or Knowledge) under which India would invite and host up to 1,000 American academics each year to teach in centrally-recognized Indian Universities, at their convenience.

The two leaders exchanged congratulations on the successful entry into orbit of their respective Mars missions, which occurred two days apart. They welcomed the establishment and planned first meeting of the NASA–ISRO Mars Joint Working Group under the U.S.-India Civil Space Joint Working Group. The leaders also look forward to the successful conclusion of a new agreement to support the NASA–ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission, to be launched in 2021.

The United and India also intend to start a new dialogue on maintaining long-term security and sustainability of the outer space environment, including space situational awareness and collision avoidance in outer space.

The President and Prime Minister recognized the extensive ongoing cooperation in the health sector which they will put to use in preventing the spread of the Ebola virus. The President welcomed India's contribution to the UN Fund and donation of protective gear to the effort against Ebola, and thanked the Prime Minister for encouraging Indian-owned businesses in West Africa to contribute to the fight against Ebola. The Prime Minister also offered to deploy Indian expertise in the fight against Ebola, including by investing its resources in producing modelling of the spread of the disease, jointly producing rapid deployable diagnostics, and considering joint training of response personnel. The United States stands ready to amplify India's efforts to achieve a further reduction in preventable child and maternal deaths, including replicating India's successful approaches in other countries.

The leaders agreed to launch a new phase of the India-U.S. Vaccine Action Program to develop affordable vaccines for dengue, malaria, and tuberculosis, and the establishment of an adjuvant development center. They also agreed in principle to initiate cooperative activities to increase capacity in cancer research and patient care delivery, including by developing collaborative programs for and with India's upcoming AIIMS-National Cancer Institute. The President welcomed India's offer to take a leading role in the Global Health Security Agenda.

Global Issues and Regional Consultations

Highlighting their shared democratic values, the President and Prime Minister recognized the critical role that women play in India and the United States, as shown by India's "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" ("Save Daughters, Celebrate Daughters, Educate Daughters") initiative. They looked forward to holding a Women Empowerment Dialogue in order to exchange best practices to enhance the role of women in their countries, and they asserted zero tolerance for violence against women.

As a critical step in strengthening global nonproliferation and export control regimes, the President and Prime Minister committed to continue work towards India's phased entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group. The President affirmed that India meets MTCR requirements and is ready for membership in the NSG. He supported India's early application and eventual membership in all four regimes.

As active participants in the Nuclear Security Summit process, the United States and India welcomed progress toward reducing the risk of terrorists acquiring nuclear weapons or related materials, and noted their shared commitment to improving nuclear security nationally and globally. They reviewed their bilateral dialogue

on nuclear security and endorsed working through India's Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership to reinforce safe and secure use of nuclear energy worldwide. They also pledged to strengthen their efforts to forge a partnership to lead global efforts for non-proliferation of WMDs, to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs, and to promote universal, verifiable, and non-discriminatory global nuclear disarmament.

Noting India's "Act East" policy and the United States' rebalance to Asia, the leaders committed to work more closely with other Asia Pacific countries through consultations, dialogues, and joint exercises. They underlined the importance of their trilateral dialogue with Japan and decided to explore holding this dialogue among their Foreign Ministers.

The President and Prime Minister emphasized the need to accelerate infrastructure connectivity and economic development corridors for regional economic integration linking South, Southeast, and Central Asia. The President reiterated that the United States, through its New Silk Road and India-Pacific Economic Corridor, is promoting the linkage of India to its neighbors and the wider region to enable a freer flow of commerce and energy.

The President and Prime Minister noted the success of their countries' collaboration on agricultural innovation in three African countries. They announced a new agreement to expand joint development initiatives in third countries in a range of sectors, including agricultural productivity, clean energy, health, women's empowerment, and disaster preparedness. They also look forward to continuing the productive cooperation in Afghanistan on promoting women's economic empowerment.

The Prime Minister and the President reaffirmed their shared interest in preserving regional peace and stability, which are critical to the Asia Pacific region's continued prosperity. The leaders expressed concern about rising tensions over maritime territorial disputes, and affirmed the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea. The Prime Minister and President called on all parties to avoid the use, or threat of use, of force in advancing their claims. The two leaders urged the concerned parties to pursue resolution of their territorial and maritime disputes through all peaceful means, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

India and the United States pledged to consult closely on global crises, especially unfolding events in Syria and Iraq. The two leaders committed to exchange information about nationals returning from these conflict zones, and to seek cooperation in protecting and responding to the needs of civilians stranded in the middle of these conflicts.

Recognizing the importance of their respective strategic partnerships with Afghanistan, the leaders asserted the importance of a sustainable, inclusive, sovereign, and democratic political order in Afghanistan, and committed to continue close consultations and cooperation in support of Afghanistan's future.

They stressed the need for diplomacy to resolve the serious concerns of the international community regarding Iran's nuclear program, and called on Iran to comply with its UN Security Council-imposed obligations and to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The two leaders expressed concerns over the continued development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, including its uranium enrichment activities. They urged DPRK to take concrete actions toward denuclearization and other goals, as well as to comply fully with all its international obligations, including all relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and to fulfill its commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks.

The President expressed appreciation for the contributions of Indian peacekeepers to global peace and stability for the past 60 years, and welcomed the partnership with India to train third country peacekeepers at India's training center in New Delhi. The President

reaffirmed his support for a reformed UN Security Council with India as a permanent member, and both leaders committed to ensuring that the Security Council continues to play an effective role in maintaining international peace and security as envisioned in the United Nations Charter.

The President also affirmed his commitment to enhancing India's voice and vote in international financial institutions, and ensuring that resources are made available and are used creatively through multilateral development banks for infrastructure financing.

The President thanked the Prime Minister for the gracious invitation to return to the great nation of India. In conclusion, the two leaders affirmed their long-term vision for a resilient and ambitious partnership through the first "Vision Statement for the Strategic Partnership," which they will hold up as the guiding framework for their governments and people.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on the Signing of the Afghanistan-United States Bilateral Security Agreement and the Afghanistan-North Atlantic Treaty Organization Status of Forces Agreement
September 30, 2014

Today we mark an historic day in the U.S.-Afghan partnership that will help advance our shared interests and the long-term security of Afghanistan. After nearly 2 years of hard work by negotiating teams on both sides, earlier today in Kabul the United States and the new Afghan Government of national unity signed a bilateral security agreement (BSA). This agreement represents an invitation from the Afghan Government to strengthen the relationship we have built over the past 13 years and provides our military servicemembers the necessary legal framework to carry out two critical missions after 2014: targeting the remnants of Al Qaida and training, advising, and assisting Afghan national security forces. The signing of the BSA also reflects the implementation of the strategic partnership agreement our two governments signed in May 2012.

Today Afghan and NATO officials also signed the NATO status of forces agreement, giving forces from allied and partner countries the legal protections necessary to carry out the NATO Resolute Support mission when ISAF comes to an end later this year.

These agreements follow an historic Afghan election in which the Afghan people exercised their right to vote and ushered in the first peaceful democratic transfer of power in their nation's history. The BSA reflects our continued commitment to support the new Afghan unity Government, and we look forward to working with this new Government to cement an enduring partnership that strengthens Afghan sovereignty, stability, unity, and prosperity and that contributes to our shared goal of defeating Al Qaida and its extremist affiliates.

This day was only possible because of the extraordinary service of our men and woman in uniform who continue to sacrifice so much in Afghanistan on behalf of our security and the Afghan people. The American people are eternally grateful for their efforts.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel
October 1, 2014

President Obama. Well, it's good, once again, to welcome the Prime Minister of Israel, Bibi Netanyahu. Obviously, he's no stranger to the White House. I think I've met with Bibi more than any world leader during my tenure as President.

We meet at a challenging time. Israel is obviously in a very turbulent neighborhood, and this gives us an opportunity once again to reaffirm the unbreakable bond between the United States and Israel and our ironclad commitment to making sure that Israel is secure.

Throughout the summer, obviously, all of us were deeply concerned about the situation in Gaza. I think the American people should be very proud of the contributions that we made through the Iron Dome program to protect the lives of Israelis at a time when rockets were pouring into Israel on a regular basis. I think we also recognize that we have to find ways to change the status quo so that both Israeli citizens are safe in their own homes and schoolchildren in their schools from the possibility of rocket fire, but also that we don't have the tragedy of Palestinian children being killed as well.

And so we'll discuss extensively both the situation of rebuilding Gaza, but also how can we find a more sustainable peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Our agenda will be broader than that, obviously. I'll debrief Bibi on the work that we're doing to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL and the broader agenda that I discussed at the United Nations, which is mobilizing a coalition not only for military action, but also to bring about a shift in Arab States and Muslim countries that isolate the cancer of violent extremism that is so pernicious and ultimately has killed more Muslims than anything else.

And we'll also have an opportunity to discuss the progress that's being made with respect to dealing with Iran's nuclear program, which obviously has been a high priority for not only Israel, but also the United States and the world community.

So we have a lot to talk about, and I appreciate very much the Prime Minister coming. It's challenging, I think, for an Israeli Prime Minister to have to work so hard during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but I know that the Prime Minister's utmost priority is making sure that his country is safe during these difficult times. And we're glad that the United States can be a partner in that process. Thank you.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Mr. President, first, I want to thank you. I want to thank you for the unflinching support you gave Israel during our difficult days and difficult summer we had, expressed in so many ways, but also in an additional installment of support for Iron Dome, which has saved so many lives, saved many lives across the border. And I thank you for that and for the continuous bond of friendship that is so strong between Israel and the United States.

I also want to thank you for this opportunity to meet with you and to discuss the enormous challenges facing the United States and Israel in the Middle East. There's definitely a new Middle East. I think it poses new dangers, but it also presents new opportunities.

As for the dangers, Israel fully supports your effort and your leadership to defeat ISIS. We think everybody should support this. And even more critical is our shared goal of preventing Iran from becoming a military nuclear power.

As you know, Mr. President, Iran seeks a deal that would lift the tough sanctions that you've worked so hard to put in place and leave it as a threshold nuclear power. And I fervently hope that under your leadership that would not happen.

Equally, I think that there are opportunities. And the opportunities, as you just expressed, is something that is changing in the Middle East, because out of the new situation, there emerges a commonality of interests between Israel and leading Arab States. And I think that we should work very hard together to seize on those common interests and build a positive program to advance a more secure, more prosperous, and a more peaceful Middle East.

I remain committed to a vision of peace of two states for two peoples based on mutual recognition and rock-solid security arrangements on the ground. And I believe we should make use of the new opportunities, think outside the box, see how we can recruit the Arab countries to advance this very hopeful agenda. And I look forward to our discussions on these and many other matters.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:23 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Prime Minister Netanyahu referred to ISIL by an alternative designation, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Remarks Honoring the 2013 Major League Soccer Champion Sporting Kansas City
October 1, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! Hello, Kansas City. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Welcome to the White House. Give it up to the MLS champ, Sporting Kansas City. [*Applause*] Yay!

Now, my Press Secretary, Josh Earnest, is from Kansas City. He has made the observation that the Royals are advancing, that the Chiefs made the Patriots look kind of bad on Monday night. [*Laughter*] And so, clearly, something is going on in Kansas City, but apparently, these guys are the ones who got it all started, got the ball rolling. It's a pretty good day to be from Kansas City. You guys are feeling kind of cocky right now. [*Laughter*]

We've got some Members of Congress who are here today from Kansas City, who obviously love sports. It's a great sports town. We've got the Sporting KC's owners and family. I want to congratulate your manager, Peter Vermes, for becoming the first person in MLS history to win titles both as a player and a coach in the same organization. [*Applause*] Pretty good.

That is not the only history that Sporting KC made this season. After beating New England and Houston in the playoffs to win the Eastern Conference, they were rewarded with the coldest title game ever played in Major League Soccer. [*Laughter*] When the game started, the temperature was just 20 degrees. By the end, it was less than 10 degrees. I'm sure that felt good. [*Laughter*] That was after 120 minutes of soccer and the longest penalty shootout—10 rounds—in MLS Cup history. But finally, Aurélien Collin kicked the winning penalty shot, and KC raised their second Cup.

And the thing about Kansas City fans is that even in below-freezing temperatures, the seats were filled. Sporting Park was packed. It is a city that loves soccer. They've sold out 51 straight games. In a section of seats called the Cauldron, thousands of fans came out to stand and chant all game long.

And this past summer, when Americans passed restaurants—packed restaurants and stadiums and city parks during the World Cup, the fans in Kansas City led the way. It seemed like 10 minutes couldn't pass without seeing live shots of thousands of fans crowding the Power and Light District and cheering on Team U.S.A. I know they cheered extra hard for Matt Besler and Graham Zusi, who represented Sporting KC and their country in Brazil. So, as soccer continues to grow here in the United States, it does so in large part because of the great example of dedicated fans in Kansas City. So congratulations to all of you.

In the same way that Kansas City has embraced its soccer team, the soccer team has embraced the city. Aurélien has a fashion line and men's clothing shop in Kansas City. [*Laughter*] Is he—where are you? You want to model some of your stuff? [*Laughter*] He's got the pocket square, the earrings. I'm going to look like him after I get out of office. [*Laughter*] He looks pretty sharp. You've got Seth Sinovic, the assistant—and Assistant Coach Kerry Zavagnin and goalkeeper Jimmy Nielsen, who all made their debuts in the Kansas City Ballet last year. [*Laughter*] That's impressive. They got to bring that trophy with them on stage to distract the audience from their limited ballet skills. [*Laughter*]

And through the Victory Project, Sporting KC works to raise money for kids in the region with cancer and special needs and life-threatening medical conditioning—conditions through the Make-A-Wish Foundation. They've opened new

practice fields, they're hosting soccer clinics all over Missouri and Kansas. So this is an organization that knows that being a champion isn't just about what you do on the field, it's also what you do off the field.

I know that the entire city is very, very proud of you. We want to congratulate you. And I want to congratulate all the fans of Kansas City for the great job you do as well. So give them all a big round of applause.

Manager Peter J. Vermes. So a little background. Fourteen years ago, as you stated earlier, I won the MLS Cup with the team as a player. And unfortunately, I didn't get a chance to come to the White House, so I figured I had to go back and become a coach to win it so that I could get here. So here I am. [*Laughter*] So I'm pretty excited about that aspect.

What I'd like to say is, from the entire organization, thank you very much for hosting us. We greatly appreciate it. Obviously, this is an incredible honor for all of us. And more importantly, hopefully, we can do it again, and we can show up here again and see you in a year from now.

So I'd like to first present you with this medal. We also have a—I'm not sure which side it's on—there is a—it's on this side? We have a shirt; you might want to go take a look at that. I think it's pretty good.

The President. It's a beautiful shirt, but I'm going to have to break the glass to wear it. [*Laughter*]

Thank you so much. Congratulations.

Manager Vermes. Thank you, I really appreciate it.

The President. Good, appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:13 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Neal L. Patterson, Clifford W. Illig, Greg S. Maday, D. Patrick Curran, and Robb Heineman, owners, Aurélien Collin, Matthew S. Besler, and Seth Sinovic, defenders, and Graham J. Zusi, midfielder, Sporting Kansas City.

Remarks at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois
October 2, 2014

Hello, Evanston! Hello, Northwestern! Oh, thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. It is so good to be here. Go 'Cats! I want to thank your president, Morty Schapiro, and the dean of the Kellogg business school, Sally Blount, for having me. I brought along some guests. Your Governor, Pat Quinn, is here. Your Senator, Dick Durbin, is here. Your Congresswoman, Jan Schakowsky, is here. We've got some folks who represent the Chicagoland area in Congress and do a great job every day: Danny Davis, Robin Kelly, Mike Quigley, Brad Schneider. We've got your mayor, Elizabeth Tisdahl. Where's Elizabeth? There she is. One of my great friends, former Chief of Staff, the mild-mannered mayor of Chicago, Rahm Emanuel, is here. [*Laughter*]

It is great to be back home. It's great to be back at Northwestern. Back when I was a Senator, I had the honor of delivering the commencement address for the class of 2006. And as it turns out, I've got a bunch of staff who graduated from here, and so they're constantly lobbying me about stuff. And so, earlier this year, I popped in via video to help kick off the dance marathon. [*Laughter*] I figured this time I'd come in person—[*laughter*]—not only because it's nice to be so close to home, but it's also just nice to see old friends, people who helped to form how I think about public service, people who helped me along the way. Toni Preckwinkle was my alderwoman before—and was a great supporter. Lisa Madigan, your attorney general, was my seatmate. State Senator Terry Link was my golf buddy. So you've got people here who I've just known for years and really not only helped me be where I am today, but helped develop how I think about public service.

And I'm also happy to be here because this is a university that is brimming with the possibilities of a new economy: your research and technology, the ideas and the innovation, the training of doctors and educators and scientists

and entrepreneurs. But you can't help but visit a campus like this and feel the promise of the future.

And that's why I'm here, because it's going to be young people like you, and universities like this, that will shape the American economy and set the conditions for middle class growth well into the 21st century.

And obviously, recent months have seen their fair share of turmoil around the globe. But one thing should be crystal clear: American leadership is the one constant in an uncertain world. It's America—our troops, our diplomats—that lead the fight to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL. It's America—our doctors, our scientists, our know-how—that leads the fight to contain and combat the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. It's America—our colleges, our graduate schools, our unrivaled private sector—that attracts so many people to our shores to study and start businesses and tackle some of the most challenging problems in the world.

When alarms go off somewhere in the world, whether it's a disaster that is natural or man made; when there's an idea or an invention that can make a difference, this is where things start. This is who the world calls: America. They don't call Moscow, they don't call Beijing, they call us. And we welcome that responsibility of leadership, because that's who we are. That's what we expect of ourselves.

But what supports our leadership role in the world is ultimately the strength of our economy here at home. And today I want to step back from the rush of global events to take a clear-eyed look at our economy, its successes and its shortcomings, and determine what we still need to build for your generation, what you can help us build.

Now, as Americans, we can and should be proud of the progress that our country has made over these past 6 years. And here are the facts, because sometimes, the noise clutters and, I think, confuses the nature of the reality out there. Here are the facts: When I took office, businesses were laying off 800,000 Americans a month. Today, our businesses are hiring 200,000 Americans a month. The unemployment rate has come down from a high of 10 percent in 2009 to 6.1 percent today. Over the past 4½ years, our businesses have created 10 million new jobs; this is the longest uninterrupted stretch of private sector job creation in our history. Think about that. And you don't have to applaud at—because I'm going to be giving you a lot of good statistics. [*Laughter*] Right now there are more job openings than at any time since 2001. All told, the United States has put more people back to work than Europe, Japan, and every other advanced economy combined. I want you to think about that. We have put more people back to work, here in America, than Europe, Japan, and every other advanced economy combined.

Now, this progress has been hard, but it has been steady and it has been real. And it's the direct result of the American people's drive and their determination and their resilience, but it's also the result of sound decisions made by my administration.

So it is indisputable that our economy is stronger today than when I took office. By every economic measure, we are better off now than we were when I took office. At the same time, it's also indisputable that millions of Americans don't yet feel enough of the benefits of a growing economy where it matters most, and that's in their own lives.

And these truths aren't incompatible. Our broader economy in the aggregate has come a long way, but the gains of recovery are not yet broadly shared or at least not broadly shared enough. We can see that homes in our communities are selling for more money and that the stock market's doubled and maybe the neighbors have new health care or a car fresh off an American assembly line. And these are all good things. But the stress that families feel, that's real too. It's still harder than it should be to pay the bills and to put away some money. Even when you're working your tail off, it's harder than it should be to get ahead.

And this isn't just a hangover from the great recession. I've always said that recovering from the crisis of 2008 was our first order of business, but I also said that our economy wouldn't be truly healthy until we reverse the

much longer and profound erosion of middle class jobs and incomes.

So here's our challenge. We're creating more jobs at a steady pace. We've got a recovering housing market, a revitalized manufacturing sector, two things that are critical to middle class success. We've also begun to see some modest wage growth in recent months. All of that has gotten the economy rolling again, despite the fact that the economies of many other countries around the world are softening. But as Americans, we measure our success by something more than our GDP or a jobs report. We measure it by whether our jobs provide meaningful work that give people a sense of purpose and whether it allows folks to take care of their families. And too many families still work too many hours with too little to show for it. Job growth could be so much faster and wages could be going up faster if we made some better decisions going forward with the help of Congress. So our task now is to harness the momentum that is real, that does exist, and make sure that we accelerate that momentum, that the economy grows and jobs grow and wages grow. That's our challenge.

When the typical family isn't bringing home any more than it did in 1997, then that means it's harder for middle class Americans to climb the ladder of success. It means that it's harder for poor Americans to grab hold of the ladder into the middle class. That's not what America is supposed to be about. It offends the very essence of who we are. Because if being an American means anything, it means we believe that even if we're born with nothing—regardless of our circumstances, our last name, whether we were wealthy, whether our parents were advantaged—no matter what our circumstances, with hard work, we can change our lives, and then, our kids can too.

And that's about more than just fairness. It's more than just the idea of what America is about. When middle class families can't afford to buy the goods or services our businesses sell, it actually makes it harder for our economy to grow. Our economy cannot truly succeed if we're stuck in a winner-take-all system where a shrinking few do very well while a growing many are struggling to get by. Historically, our economic greatness rests on a simple principle: When the middle class thrives and when people can work hard to get into the middle class, then America thrives. And when it doesn't, America doesn't.

This is going to be a central challenge of our times. We have to make our economy work for every working American. And every policy I pursue as President is aimed at answering that challenge.

Over the last decade, we learned the hard way that it wasn't sustainable to have an economy where too much of the growth was based on inflated home prices and bubbles that burst and a casino mentality on Wall Street; where the recklessness of a few could threaten all of us; where incomes at the top skyrocketed, while working families saw theirs decline. That was not a formula for sustained growth. We need an economy that's built on a rock, and that—a rock that is durable and competitive, and that's a steady source of good, middle class jobs. When that's happening, everybody does well.

So that's why on day one, when I took office, with Rahm and Dick Durbin and others who were working with us, I said we would rebuild our economy on a new foundation for growth and prosperity. And with dedicated, persistent effort, we've actually been laying the cornerstones of this foundation every single day since.

So I mentioned earlier that there is not an economic measure by which we're not better off than when we took office. But let me break down what we've also been doing structurally to make sure that we have a strong foundation for growth going forward.

The first cornerstone is new investments in the energy and technologies that make America a magnet for good, middle class jobs. So, right off the bat, as soon as I came into office, we upped our investments in American energy to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and strengthen our own energy security. And today, the number-one oil and gas producer in the world is no longer Russia or Saudi Arabia. It's America.

For the first time in nearly two decades, we now produce more oil than we buy from other countries. We're advancing so fast in this area that 2 years ago, I set a goal to cut our oil imports by half by—in half by 2020, and we've actually—we will meet that goal this year, 6 years ahead of schedule.

So that's in the traditional fossil fuel area. But at the same time, we've helped put tens of thousands of people to work manufacturing wind turbines and installing solar panels on homes and businesses. We have tripled the electricity that we harness from the wind. We have increased tenfold what we generate from the sun. We have brought enough clean energy on line to power every home and business in Illinois and Wisconsin, 24/7. And that's the kind of progress that we can be proud of and in part accounts for the progress we have also made in reducing carbon emissions that cause climate change. And I know that here at Northwestern, your researchers are working to convert sunlight into liquid fuel, which sounds impossible or at least really hard. [*Laughter*] But the good news is, if you need to get the hard or the impossible done, America and American universities are a pretty good place to start.

Meanwhile, our 100-year supply of natural gas is a big factor in drawing jobs back to our shores. Many are in manufacturing, which produce the quintessential middle class job. During the last decade, it was widely accepted that American manufacturing was in irreversible decline. And just 6 years ago, its crown jewel, the American auto industry, could not survive on its own. With the help of folks like Jan and Dick and Mike Quigley and others, we helped our automakers restructure and retool. Today, they're building and selling new cars at the fastest rate in 8 years. We invested in new plants, new technologies, new high-tech hubs like the Digital Manufacturing and Design Institute that Northwestern has partnered with in Chicago.

Today, American manufacturing has added more than 700,000 new jobs. It's growing almost twice as fast as the rest of the economy. And more than half of all manufacturing executives have said they are actively looking at bringing jobs back from China. To many in the middle class, the last decade was defined by outsourcing good jobs overseas. If we keep up these investments, we can define this decade by what's known as "insourcing," with new factories now opening their doors here in America at the fastest pace in decades. And in the process, we've also worked to grow American exports and open new markets, knock down barriers to trade, because businesses that export tend to have better paying jobs. So today, our businesses sell more goods and services made in America to the rest of the world than ever before—ever.

And that's progress we can be proud of. Now, we also know that many of these manufacturing jobs have changed. You're not just punching in and pounding rivets anymore; you're coding computers, and you're guiding robots. You're mastering 3–D printing. And these jobs require some higher education or technical training. And that's why the second cornerstone of the new foundation we've been building is making sure our children are prepared and our workers are prepared to fill the jobs of the future.

America thrived in the 20th century because we made high school free. We sent a generation to college. We cultivated the most educated workforce in the world. But it didn't take long for other countries to look at our policies and caught on to the secret of our success. So they set out to educate their kids too so they could outcompete our kids. We have to lead the world in education once again.

That's why we launched a Race to the Top in our schools, trained thousands of math and science teachers, supported States that raised standards for learning. Today, teachers in 48 States and DC are teaching our kids the knowledge and skills they need to compete and win in the global economy. Working with parents and educators, we've turned around some of the country's lowest performing schools. We're on our way to connecting 99 percent of students to high-speed Internet and making sure every child, at every seat, has the best technology for learning.

And so look, let's face it: Some of these changes are hard. Sometimes, they cause controversy. And we have a long way to go. But public education in America is actually improving. Last year, our elementary and middle school students had the highest math and reading scores on record. The dropout rates for Latinos and African Americans are down. The high school graduation rate—the high school graduation rate is up. It's now above 80 percent for the first time in history. We've invested in more than 700 community colleges, which are so often gateways to the middle class, and we're connecting them with employers to train high school graduates for good jobs in fast-growing fields like high-tech manufacturing and energy and IT and cybersecurity.

Here in Chicago, Rahm just announced that the city will pay community college tuition for more striving high school graduates. We've helped more students afford college with grants and tax credits and loans. And today, more young people are graduating than ever before. We've sent more veterans to college on the post-9/11 GI bill—including several veterans here at Northwestern—and a few of us—a few of them are in this hall today, and we thank them for their service.

So we've made progress on manufacturing and creating good jobs. We've made progress on education. Of course, even if you have the right education, for decades, one of the things that made it harder for families to make ends meet and businesses to grow was the high cost of health care. And so the third cornerstone had to be health care reform.

In the decade before the Affordable Care Act, a.k.a., Obamacare—[*laughter*]—in the decade before the Affordable Care Act, double-digit premium increases were common. CEOs called them one of the biggest challenges to their competitiveness. And if your employer didn't drop your coverage to avoid these costs, they might pass them on to you and take them out of your wages.

Today, we have seen a dramatic slowdown in the rising cost of health care. When we passed the Affordable Care Act, the critics were saying, what are you doing about cost? Well, let me tell you what we've done about costs. If your family gets your health care through your employer, premiums are rising at a rate tied for the lowest on record. And what this means for the economy is staggering. If we hadn't taken this on and premiums had kept growing at the rate they did in the last decade, the average premium for family coverage today would be $1,800 higher than they are. Now, most people don't notice it, but that's $1,800 you don't have to pay out of your pocket or see vanish from your paycheck. That's like a $1,800 tax cut. That's not for folks who signed up for Obamacare. That's the consequences of some of the reforms that we've made.

And because the insurance marketplaces we created encourage insurers to compete for your business, in many of cities they've announced that next year's premiums—well, something important is happening here—next year's premiums are actually falling in some of these markets. One expert said this is "defying the law of physics." But we're getting it done. And it is progress we can be proud of.

So we're slowing the cost of health care, and we're covering more people at the same time. In just the last year, we reduced the share of uninsured Americans by 26 percent. That means one in four uninsured Americans—about 10 million people—have gained the financial security of health insurance in less than 1 year. And for young entrepreneurs, like many of you here today, the fact that you can compare and buy affordable plans in the marketplace frees you up to strike out on your own, chase that new idea, something I hope will unleash new and—new services and products and enterprises all across the country. So the job lock that used to exist because you needed health insurance, you're free from that now. You can go out and do something on your own and get affordable health care.

And meanwhile, partly because health care prices have been growing at the slowest rates in nearly 50 years, the growth in what health care costs the Government is down also. I want everybody to listen carefully here, because when we were debating the Affordable Care Act, there was a lot of complaining about how

we couldn't afford this. The independent, nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office recently reported that in 2020, Medicare and Medicaid will cost us $188 billion less than projected just 4 years ago. And here's what that means in layman's terms: Health care has long been the single biggest driver of America's future deficits. It's been the single biggest driver of our debt. Health care is now the single biggest factor driving down those deficits.

And this is a game-changer for the fourth cornerstone of this new foundation: getting our fiscal house in order for the long run so we can afford to make investments that grow the middle class. Between a growing economy, some prudent spending cuts, health care reform, and asking the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more on their taxes, over the past 5 years, we've cut our deficits by more than half. When I took office, the deficit was nearly 10 percent of our economy. Today, it's approaching 3 percent. In other words, we can shore up America's long-term finances without falling back into the mindless austerity or manufactured crises or trying to find excuses to slash benefits to seniors that dominated Washington budget debates for so long.

And finally, we've put in place financial reform to protect consumers and prevent a crisis on Wall Street from hammering Main Street ever again. We have new tools to prevent "too big to fail," to stop taxpayer-funded bailouts. We made it illegal for big banks to gamble with your money. We established the first-ever consumer watchdog to protect consumers from irresponsible lending or credit card practices. We secured billions of dollars in relief for consumers who get taken advantage of. And working with States' attorneys general like Lisa Madigan, we've seen industry practices changing.

Now an argument you'll hear oftentimes from critics is that the way to grow the economy is to just get rid of regulations, free folks up from the oppressive hand of the government. And you know, it turns out, truth be told, there are still some kind of dopey regulations on the books. [*Laughter*] There are regulations that are outdated or are no longer serving a useful purpose. And we have scrubbed the laws out there and identified hundreds that are outdated, that don't help our economy, that don't make sense, and we're saving businesses billions of dollars by gradually eliminating those unnecessary regulations. But you have to contrast that with rules that discourage a casino-style mentality on Wall Street or rules that protect the basic safety of workers on the job or rules that safeguard the air our children breathe and keep mercury or arsenic out of our water supply. These don't just have economic benefits, these are rules that save lives and protect families. And I'll always stand up for those, and they're good for our economy.

So here's the bottom line: For all the work that remains, for all the citizens that we still need to reach, what I want people to know is that there are some really good things happening in America. Unemployment down. Jobs up. Manufacturing growing. Deficits cut by more than half. High school graduation is up. College enrollment up. Energy production up. Clean energy production up. Financial system more stable. Health care costs rising at a slower rate. Across the board, the trend lines have moved in the right direction.

That's because this new foundation is now in place. New investments in energy and technologies that create new jobs and new industries. New investments in education that will make our workforce more skilled and competitive. New reforms to health care that cut costs for families and businesses. New reforms to our Federal budget that will promote smart investments and stronger—a stronger economy for future generations. New rules for our financial system to protect consumers and prevent the kinds of crises that we endured from happening again.

You add it all up, and it's no surprise that for the first time in more than a decade, business leaders from around the world—these are business surveys—Kellogg, you're familiar with these. [*Laughter*] Business leaders from around the world have said the world's most attractive place to invest is not India or China, it's the United States of America. And that's because the financial sector is healthier, because manufacturing is healthier, because the

housing market is healthier, because health care inflation is at a 50-year low, because our energy boom is at new highs. Because of all these things, our economy isn't just primed for steadier, more sustained growth; America is better poised to lead and succeed in the 21st century than any other nation on Earth. We've got the best cards.

And I will not allow anyone to dismantle this foundation. Because for the first time, we can see real, tangible evidence of what the contours of the new economy will look like. It's an economy teeming with new industry and commerce and humming with new energy and new technologies and bustling with highly skilled, higher-wage workers.

It's an America where a student graduating from college has the chance to advance through a vibrant job market and where an entrepreneur can start a new business and succeed and where an older worker can retool for that new job. And to fully realize this vision requires steady, relentless investment in these areas. We cannot let up, and we cannot be complacent. We have to be hungry as a nation. We have to compete. When we do—if we take the necessary steps to build on the foundation that, through some really hard work, we have laid over the last several years—I promise you, over the next 10 years, we'll build an economy where wage growth is stronger than it was in the past three decades. It is achievable.

So let me just talk a little more specifically about what we should be doing right now. First of all, we've got to realize that the trends that have battered the middle class for so long aren't ones that we're going to reverse overnight. The facts that I just laid out don't mean that there aren't a lot of folks out there who are underpaid, they're underemployed, they're working long hours, they're having trouble making ends meet. I hear from them every day. I meet with them. And it's heartbreaking, because they're struggling hard. And there are no silver bullets for job creation or faster wage growth. Anybody who tells you otherwise is not telling the truth. But there are policies that would grow jobs and wages faster than we're doing right now.

If we rebuild roads and bridges—because we've got $2 trillion of deferred maintenance on our infrastructure—we won't just put construction workers and engineers on the job; we will revitalize entire communities and connect people to jobs and make it easier for businesses to ship goods around the world. And we can pay for it with tax reform that actually cuts rates on businesses, but closes wasteful loopholes, making it even more attractive for companies to invest and create jobs here in the United States. Let's do this and make our economy stronger.

If we make it easier for first-time home buyers to get a loan, we won't just create even more construction jobs and speed up recovery in the housing market, we'll speed up your efforts to grow a nest egg and start a new company and send your own kids to college and graduate school someday. So let's help more young families buy that first home, make our economy stronger.

If we keep investing in clean energy technology, we won't just put people to work on the assembly lines, pounding into place the zero-carbon components of a clean energy age, we'll reduce our carbon emissions and prevent the worst costs of climate change down the road. Let's do this: invest in new American energy and make our economy stronger.

If we make high-quality preschool available to every child, not only will we give our kids a safe place to learn and grow while their parents go to work, we'll give them the start that they need to succeed in school and earn higher wages and form more stable families of their own. In fact, today I'm setting a new goal: By the end of this decade, let's enroll 6 million children in high-quality preschool. That is an achievable goal that we know will make our workforce stronger.

If we redesign our high schools, we'll graduate more kids with the real-world skills that lead directly to a good job in the new economy. If we invest more in job training and apprenticeships, we'll help more workers fill more good jobs that are coming back to this country. If we make it easier for students to pay off their college loans, we'll help a whole lot of young

people breathe easier and feel freer to take the jobs they really want. So look, let's do this. Let's keep reforming our education system to make sure young people at every level have a shot at success, just like folks at Northwestern do.

If we fix our broken immigration system, we won't just prevent some of the challenges like the ones that we saw at the border this summer, we'll encourage the best and the brightest from around the world to study here and stay here and create jobs here. Independent economists say that a big bipartisan reform bill that the House has now blocked for over a year would grow our economy, shrink our deficits, secure our borders. Let's pass that bill. Let's make America stronger.

If we want to make and sell the best products, we have to invest in the best ideas, like you do here at Northwestern. Your nanotechnology institute doesn't just conduct groundbreaking research, that research has spun off 20 startups and more than 1,800 products. That means jobs.

Here's another example. Over a decade ago, America led the international effort to sequence the human genome. One study found that every dollar we invested returned $140 to our economy. Now, I don't have an MBA, but that's sounds like a good return on investment. [*Laughter*] Today, though, the world's largest genomics center is in China. That doesn't mean America is slipping, it does mean America isn't investing. We can't let other countries discover the products and businesses that will shape the next century and the century after that. So we've got to invest more in the kinds of basic research that led to Google and GPS and makes our economy stronger.

If we raise the minimum wage, we won't just put more money in workers' pockets; they'll spend that money at local businesses, who in turn will hire more people.

In the 2 years since I first asked Congress to raise the national minimum wage, 13 States and DC went and raised theirs. And more business owners are joining them on their own. It's on the ballot in five States this November, including Illinois. And here's the thing: Recent surveys show that a majority of small-business owners support a gradual increase to $10.10 an hour. A survey just last week showed that nearly two-thirds of employers thought the minimum wage should go up in their State, and more than half of them think it should be at least $10. So what's stopping us? Let's agree that nobody who works full time in America should ever have to raise a family in poverty. Let's give America a raise. It will make the economy stronger.

If we make sure a woman is paid equal to a man for her efforts, that is not just giving women a boost. Gentlemen, you want your wife making that money that she has earned. [*Laughter*] It gives the entire family a boost, and it gives the entire economy a boost. Women now outpace men in college degrees; they—and graduate degrees, but they often start their careers with lower pay. And that gap grows over time, and that affects their families. It's stupid. [*Laughter*] Let's inspire and support more women, especially in fields like science and technology and engineering and math. Let's catch up to 2014, pass a fair pay law, make our economy stronger.

And while we're at it, let's get rid of the barriers that keep more moms who want to work from entering the workforce. Let's do what Dean Blount did here at Kellogg. She's been working with us at the White House, helping business and political leaders who recognize that flexibility in the workplace and paid maternity leave are actually good for business. And let's offer those deals to dads too. Because we want to make sure that they can participate in child rearing. And let's make sure work pays for parents who are raising young kids. It's a good investment.

California adopted paid leave, which boosted work and earnings for moms with young kids. Let's follow their lead. Let's make our economy stronger.

Now, none of these policies I just mentioned on their own will entirely get us to where we want to be. But if we do these things systematically, the cumulative impact will be huge. Unemployment will drop a little faster, which means workers will gain a little more leverage when it comes to wages and salaries,

which means consumer confidence will go up, which means families will be able to spend a little more and save a little more, which means our economy grows stronger and growth will be shared. More people will feel this recovery, rather than just reading about it in the newspapers. That's the truth.

And I'm going to keep making the argument for these policies, because they are right for America. They are supported by the facts. And I'm always willing to work with anyone, Democrat or Republican, to get things done. And every once in a while, we actually see a bill land on my desk from Congress. I'm all—[*laughter*]. And we do a bill signing, and I look at the Members, and I say, I tell them, look how much fun this is. [*Laughter*] Let's do this again. [*Applause*] Let's do it again.

But if gridlock prevails, if cooperation and compromise are no longer valued, but vilified, then I'll keep doing everything I can on my own if it will make a difference for working Americans.

I will keep teaming up with Governors and mayors and CEOs and philanthropists who want to help. Here's an example. There are 28 million Americans who would benefit from a minimum wage increase—28 million. Over the past 2 years, because we've teamed up with cities and States and businesses and went around Congress, 7 million of them have gotten a raise. So, until Congress chooses to step up and help all of them, I'll keep fighting to get an extra million here and an extra million there with a raise. We'll keep fighting for this.

And let me just say one other thing about the economy, because oftentimes, you hear this from the critics: The notion is that the agenda I've just outlined is somehow contrary to probusiness, capitalist, free-market values. And since we're here at a business school, I thought it might be useful to point out—[*laughter*]—that Bloomberg, for example, I think came out with an article today saying that corporate balance sheets are the strongest just about that they've ever been. Corporate debt is down. Profits are up. Businesses are doing good.

So this idea that somehow any of these policies—like the minimum wage or fair pay or clean energy—are somehow bad for business is simply belied by the facts. It's not true. And if you talk to business leaders, even the ones who really don't like to admit it because they don't like me that much—[*laughter*]—they'll admit that actually their balance sheets look really strong and that this economy is doing better than our competitors around the world. So don't buy this notion that somehow this is an antibusiness agenda. This is a probusiness agenda. This is a pro–economic growth agenda.

Now, I am not on the ballot this fall. Michelle is pretty happy about that. [*Laughter*] But make no mistake: These policies are on the ballot, every single one of them. This isn't some official campaign speech or political speech, but—and I'm not going to tell you who to vote for—although, I suppose it's kind of implied. [*Laughter*] But what I have done is laid out my ideas to create more jobs and to grow more wages. And I've also tried to correct the record, because, as I said, there's a lot of noise out there. Every item I ticked off, those are the facts. It's not conjecture. It's not opinion. It's not partisan rhetoric. I laid out facts.

So I've laid out what I know has happened over the 6 years of my Presidency so far, and I've laid out an agenda for what I think should happen to make us grow even better, grow even faster. A true opposition party should now have the courage to lay out their agenda, hopefully, also grounded in facts.

There's a reason fewer Republicans are preaching doom on the deficits. It's because the deficits have come down at almost a record pace, and they're now manageable. There's a reason fewer Republicans, you hear them running about Obamacare, because while good, affordable health care might seem like a fanged threat to the freedom of the American people on Fox News—[*laughter*]—it's turns out, it's working pretty well in the real world.

Now, when push came to shove this year and Republicans in Congress actually had to take a stand on policies that would help the middle class and working Americans, like raising the minimum wage or enacting fair pay or

refinancing student loans or extending insurance for the unemployed, the answer was "no." The one thing they did vote "yes" on was another massive tax cut for the wealthiest Americans. In fact, just last month, at least one top Republican in Congress said that tax cuts for those at the top are—and I'm quoting here—"even more pressing now" than they were 30 years ago. More pressing. When nearly all the gains of the recovery have gone to the top 1 percent, when income inequality is at as high a rate as we've seen in decades, I find that a little hard to swallow, that they really desperately need a tax cut right now, it's urgent.

Why? [*Laughter*] What are the facts? What is the empirical data that would justify that position? Kellogg business school, you guys are all smart. You do all this analysis. You run the numbers. Has anybody here seen a credible argument that that is what our economy needs right now? Seriously. [*Laughter*]

But this is the—if you watch the debate, including on some of the business newscasts—[*laughter*]—and the—folks are just pontificating about how important this is. Based on what? What's the data? What's the proof? If there were any credible argument that says when those at the top do well and eventually everybody else will do well, it would have borne itself out by now. We'd see data that that was true. It's not.

American economic greatness has never trickled down from the top. It grows from a rising, thriving middle class and opportunity for working people. That's what makes us different.

So I just want to be clear here, because you guys are going to be business leaders of the future and you're going to be making decisions based on logic and reason and facts and data. And right now you've got two starkly different visions for this country. And I believe, with every bone in my body, that there's one clear choice here, because it's supported by facts.

And this is our moment to define what the next decade and beyond will look like. This is our chance to set the conditions for middle class growth in the 21st century. The decisions we make this year and over the next few years will determine whether or not we set the stage for America's greatness in this century just like we did in the last one; whether or not we restore the link between hard work and higher wages; whether or not we continue to invest in a skilled, educated citizenry; whether or not we rebuild an economy where everyone who works hard can get ahead.

And some of that depends on you. There is a reason why I came to a business school instead of a school of government. I actually believe that capitalism is the greatest force for prosperity and opportunity the world has ever known. And I believe in private enterprise—not government, but innovators and risk takers and makers and doers—driving job creation.

But I also believe in a higher principle, which is we're all in this together. That's the spirit that made the American economy work. That's what made the American economy not just the world's greatest wealth creator, but the world's greatest opportunity generator. And because you're America's future business leaders and civic leaders, that makes you the stewards of America's greater—greatest singlet asset, and that's our people.

So, as you engage in the pursuit of profits, I challenge you to do so with a sense of purpose. As you chase your own success, I challenge you to cultivate more ways to help more Americans chase their success.

It is the American people who've made the progress of the last 6 years possible. It is the American people who will make our future progress possible. It is the American people that make American business successful. And they should share in that success. It's not just for you, it's for us. Because it's the American people that made the investments over the course of generations to allow you and me to be here and experience this success. That's the story of America. America is a story of progress: sometimes halting, sometimes incomplete, sometimes harshly challenged. But the story of America is a story of progress.

And it's now been 6 long years since our economy nearly collapsed. Despite that shock, through the pain that so many fellow Americans felt, for all the gritty, grueling work re-

quired to come back, all the work that's left to be done, a new foundation is laid. A new future is yet to be written. And I am as confident as ever that that future will be led by the United States of America.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m. in the Cahn Auditorium at the Kellogg School of Management. In his remarks, he referred to Toni R. Preckwinkle, board president, Cook County, IL; Larry Levitt, senior vice president for special initiatives, Kaiser Family Foundation; and Rep. Paul D. Ryan. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Annual Awards Gala

October 2, 2014

The President. Good evening, everybody! Thank you to Senator Menendez, Congressman Hinojosa, and the entire CHC for inviting me. Everybody, take—you can have a seat, take a load off. [*Laughter*] I want to congratulate tonight's outstanding honorees: José Díaz-Balart, Eliseo Medina, and Juliet García. I want to thank all the other Members of Congress who are here tonight, including the outstanding Nancy Pelosi. Although I have to say, Nancy Pelosi was really talking mostly about the San Francisco Giants—in a Nationals town. So that just shows her courage. [*Laughter*]

I want to give a special thanks to two young men who rode over with me from the White House tonight. Luis and Víctor are CHCI interns and fellows. They are also DREAMers, living and working in the country they call home and making it a better place for all of us. Their stories are inspiring. And along with the other CHCI fellows, they give me great hope for the future. They make me optimistic about what America is all about.

Now, 6 years ago, I came here as a candidate for this office, and I said if we worked together, we could do more than just win an election. We could rebuild America so that everybody—no matter what you look like, no matter what your last name is, no matter what God you worship, no matter who you love—everybody is free to pursue their dreams.

And that's exactly what we've set out to do. And today, there is progress that we should be proud of. I gave a long speech this afternoon about it because sometimes, we don't focus on what has happened over these last 6 years. Over the past 4½ years, our businesses have created 10 million new jobs, the longest uninterrupted stretch of job creation in our history. In the spring, our economy grew faster than any time since 2006, and there are more job openings today than at any time since 2001. And we are going to keep working as hard as we can to help create good, middle class jobs even faster.

Six years ago, I told you we would confront the crisis of overcrowded classrooms and underfunded schools and help more families afford higher education. And since 2000, we have cut the Latino dropout rate by more than half. Because dropouts are down, today, our high school graduation rate is the highest on record. And since 2008, the rate of college enrollment among young Latinos has risen by 45 percent.

Six years ago, I said we'd take on a broken health care system that left one out of three Hispanics uninsured. Today, millions more Americans have quality, affordable health insurance that they can count on. Over the last year alone, about 10 million Americans gained health insurance, and that includes millions of Latinos.

Six years ago, I told you we'd restore the idea at the heart of America that we're in this together, that I am my brother's keeper and my sister's keeper. Last year, poverty among Latinos fell and incomes rose. And this week, I

launched the "My Brother's Keeper" Community Challenge, asking every community in our country to publicly commit to strategies that will help put our young people on the path to success, from cradle to career.

So the point I want to make is, the progress we've made has been hard. Sometimes, it's been slower than we want, but that progress has been steady, and it has been real. We have done big things together, and we're going to do more. And tonight I want to make something clear: Fixing our broken immigration system is one more big thing that we have to do and that we will do.

Now, I know there's deep frustration in many communities around the country right now. And I understand that frustration because I share it. I know the pain of families torn apart because we live with a system that's broken. But if anybody wants to know where my heart is or whether I want to have this fight, let me put those questions to rest right now. I am not going to give up this fight until it gets done.

As Bob mentioned, I've taken so far actions——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. I'm about to get to that. About to get to it. [*Applause*] The actions that we've taken so far——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. You're going to want to hear it. You want to hear what I say, rather than just——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. The actions that we've taken so far are why more than 600,000 young people can live and work without fear of deportation. That's because of the actions I took and the administration took.

[*At this point, the audience disruption continued, and the President continued speaking.*]

Because of the coalition that we built together—business and labor, faith and law enforcement, Democrats and Republican created a bipartisan bill and got it through the Senate last year. When States like Alabama and Arizona passed some of the harshest immigration laws in history, my Attorney General took them on in court, and we won.

So you know what we've done together. You know that we've done it despite what is possibly the most uncooperative House of Representatives in history. If House Republicans brought the Senate bill up for a vote today, I would pass it—it would pass today. I would sign it today. And they know it. But instead, they've been sitting on it for more than a year. They voted to strip DREAMers of new protections and make them eligible for deportation. Not once, but twice they voted that way.

And this summer, when a wave of unaccompanied minors crossed part of our southwest border, my administration matched compassion for kids with a firm message to families. Today, fewer parents are sending their children on that perilous journey than they were at this time last year, and we're working to give more kids the chance to apply for asylum in their home countries and avoid that journey altogether.

But while we worked to deal with an urgent humanitarian problem, while we actually did something about the problem, Republicans exploited the situation for political gain. And in June, as all this was going on, Speaker Boehner told me he would continue to block a vote on immigration reform for at least the remainder of this year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, don't boo, vote. I—[*applause*]. [*Laughter*]

I've said before that if Congress failed to live up to its responsibilities to solve this problem, I would act to fix as much of our immigration system as I can on my own, and I meant what I said. So this is not a question of if, but when. Because the moment I act—and it will be taking place between the November elections and the end of the year—opponents of reform will roll out the same old scare tactics. They'll use whatever excuse they have to try to block any attempt at immigration reform at all. And we have to be realistic. For any action to last, for it to be effective and extend beyond my administration—because I'm only here 2 more years—we're going to have to build more support of

the American people so that it is sustainable and lasting.

And so I am going to be spending the next month, month and a half, 6 weeks, 8 weeks, I'm going to be spending that time not just talking about what we've done for the economy, but explaining why immigration reform is good for our economy and why it's good for everybody. And when opponents are out there saying who knows what, I'm going to need you to have my back. I'm going to need you to have my back. I need you to keep putting pressure on Congress, because the fact of the matter is no matter how bold I am, nothing I can do will be as comprehensive or lasting as the Senate bill. Anything I can do can be reversed by the next President.

To move beyond what I can do in a limited way, we are going to need legislation. And if we want that legislation to happen sooner rather than later, then there's one more thing I need you to do. And I've got to have you talk to your constituents and your communities, and you've got to get them out to vote.

You already know how powerful the Latino vote can be. In 2012, Latinos voted in record numbers. The next day, even Sean Hannity changed his mind and decided immigration reform was a good idea. [*Laughter*] But despite that record-breaking turnout, only 48 percent of Hispanic voters turned out—fewer than half. Fewer than half. So the clearest path to change is to change that number. *Sí, se puede, si votamos*—Yes, we can, if we vote!

Earlier this year, I had the chance to host a screening of the film "Cesar Chavez" at the White House, and I was reminded that Cesar organized for nearly 20 years before his first major victory. He never saw that time as a failure. Looking back, he said: "I remember . . . the families who joined our movement and paid dues long before there was any hope of winning contracts. . . . I remember thinking then that with spirit like that . . . no force on Earth could stop us."

That's the promise of America then, and that's the promise of America now. People who love this country can change it. America isn't Congress; America isn't Washington. America is the striving immigrant who starts a business or the mom who works two low-wage jobs to give her kid a better life. America is the union leader and the CEO who put aside their differences to make the economy stronger. America is the student who defies the odds to become the first in a family to go to college, the citizen who defies the cynics and goes out there and votes, the young person who comes out of the shadows to demand the right to dream. That's what America is about.

And 6 years ago, I asked you to believe. And tonight I ask you to keep believing, not just in my ability to bring about change, but in your ability to bring about change. Because in the end, DREAMer is more than just a title, it's a pretty good description of what it means to be an American. Each of us is called on to stand proudly for the values we believe in and the future we seek. All of us have the chance to reach out and pull this country that we call home a little closer to its founding ideals.

That's the spirit that's alive in this room. That's the spirit I saw in Luis and Víctor and all the young people here tonight. That spirit is alive in America today. And with that spirit, no force on Earth can stop us.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:54 p.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to MSNBC host and Telemundo news anchor José Díaz-Balart; Eliseo V. Medina, international secretary-treasurer, Service Employees International Union (SEIU); Juliet V. García, executive director, University of Texas Institute of the Americas; Luis Alcauter and Víctor Mena, interns, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute; and Sean Hannity, host, Fox News's "Hannity" program. He also referred to S. 744.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Town Hall Meeting at Millennium Steel Service, LLC, in Princeton, Indiana

October 3, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! Hello, Indiana! It's good to be back close to home. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat.

Well, first of all, let me thank Henry and everybody for extending such a warm welcome. It's good to be back in Indiana. A couple people I just want to acknowledge very quickly: Your mayor, Bob Hurst. Where did Mayor Hurst go? He was here just a second—there he is right there. Give him a big round of applause. We've got your former Congressman, Brad Ellsworth, in the house. Say hi to Brad.

It is great to be back in Indiana. It's great to be in Princeton. And I want to thank Millennium Steel for hosting us here today. I'm here because you might have heard that today is National Manufacturing Day. You don't get the day off on National Manufacturing Day. [*Laughter*] But factories like this one, all over the country, are opening their doors to give young people a chance to understand what opportunities exist in manufacturing in 21st century in the United States of America. So I figured, what better place to celebrate Manufacturing Day than with a manufacturer?

And instead of giving a long speech, what I want to do today is just have a conversation with folks about what's happening in the American economy, what's happening in your lives, what's happening in manufacturing, and to talk a little bit about how we can continue to build an economy that works for everybody, that gives everybody who's willing to work hard a chance.

And I wanted to do that here, because in some ways, American manufacturing is powering the American recovery. This morning we learned that last month, our businesses added more than 236,000 jobs. Unemployment—the unemployment rate fell from 6.1 percent to 5.9. What that means is that the unemployment rate is below 6 percent for the first time in 6 years. And we're on pace for the strongest job growth since the 1990s—strongest job growth since the 1990s. Over the past 55 months, our businesses have now created 10.3 million new jobs.

Now that happens to be the longest uninterrupted stretch of job growth in the private sector in American history. And all told, the United States has put more folks back to work than Europe, Japan, and all other advanced economies combined. All of them combined, we've put more folks back to work right here in the United States of America.

So this progress that we've been making, it's been hard, it goes in fits and starts, it's not always been perfectly smooth or as fast as we want, but it is real, and it is steady, and it is happening. And it's making a difference in economies all across the country. And it's the direct result of the best workers in the world, the drive and determination of the American people, the resilience of the American people bouncing back from what was the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. And it's also got a little bit to do with some decisions we made pretty early on in my administration.

So, just to take an example, many of you know that the auto industry was really in a bad spot when I came into office. And we decided to help our automakers to rebuild, to retool, and they're now selling new cars at the fastest rate in about 8 years. And they're great cars too. And that's helped a lot of communities all across the Midwest. And that's just one example of what's been happening to American manufacturing generally.

About 10, 15 years ago, everybody said American manufacturing is going downhill, everything is moving to China or other countries. And the Midwest got hit a lot harder than a lot of places because we were the backbone of American manufacturing. But because folks invested in new plants and new technologies and there were hubs that were created between businesses and universities and community colleges so that workers could master and get trained in some of these new technologies, what we've now seen is manufacturing driving

economic growth in a way we haven't seen in about 20, 25 years.

Because of the efforts that we've made, manufacturing as a whole has added about 700,000 new jobs. It's growing twice as fast as the rest of the economy. New factories are opening their doors. More than half of manufacturing executives have said they're actively looking to bring jobs back from China. Our businesses are selling more goods overseas than any time in our history. And the reason this is important is not just because of some abstract statistic, manufacturing jobs have good pay and good benefits.

And they create a ripple effect to the whole economy, because everybody who's working here at Millennium Steel, because you're getting paid well, because you've got decent benefits, that means that the restaurants in the neighborhood are doing better. It means you can afford to make your mortgage payments and buy a new car yourself and buy some new appliances. And you get a virtuous cycle in which all businesses are doing better.

To most middle class folks, the last decade was defined by those jobs going overseas. But if we keep up these investments, then we can define this decade as a period instead of outsourcing, insourcing: bringing jobs back to America. And when you ask business executives around the world, what's the number-one place to invest their money right now, for a long time, it was China. Today they say the best place to invest money is here in the United States of America. [*Applause*] Here in the United States of America.

So there is a lot of good stuff happening in the economy right now. But what we all know is, is that there's still some challenges—there's still some challenges—because there are still a lot of families where somebody in the family is out of work or isn't getting as many hours as they want. There's still a lot of folks who, at the end of the month, are having trouble paying the bills. And wages and incomes have not moved up as fast as all the gains we're making in jobs and productivity. Too much of the growth in income and wealth is going to the that they need to be rebuilt. The only thing very top; not enough of it is being spread to the ordinary worker.

And that means that we've still got some more work to do to put in place policies that make sure that the economy works not just for the few, but it works for everybody, and that if you work hard you're going to be able to pay the bills, you're going to be able to retire with some dignity and some respect and you can send your kids to school without having to worry about it. That's what we've got to be working on: making sure that no matter who you are, where you started, you can make it here in America. That's what the American Dream is all about.

Now, let me just close by saying a couple of things that I know would make a difference if we were doing them right now to make the economy grow even faster, to bring the unemployment rate down even faster. And if employers are hiring more workers and the labor market gets a little bit tighter, then employers end up paying a little bit more and wages go up a little bit more, and that means people have a little more money in their pockets, and then they're spending more of it on businesses' products and services, which means then even more workers get hired. There are some things we could do right now that would make a difference.

We should be investing in roads and bridges and ports and infrastructure all across the country. We've got a lot of stuff that was built back in the forties and the fifties that needs to be updated. And if we're putting construction workers back to work, that means they also need some steel. They also need some concrete. It means you need engineers doing the work and you need suppliers. And all that would give a huge boost to the economy and make it easier for businesses to deliver their products and services around the world. It would be good for our economy. That's something that we should be doing right now.

And I've been putting proposals forward in front of Congress to say, let's go ahead and just start rebuilding all kinds of parts of America that need rebuilding. And nobody disagrees that's holding us up right now is politics.

We should be raising the minimum wage to make sure that more workers—[*applause*]—if they are working full time shouldn't be living in poverty. And we've got legislation going on right now that would call for a minimum wage of $10.10 an hour, which would mean that if you work full time, you're not living in poverty, you can raise a family. And the good news is, about 13 States and a bunch of cities around the country have gone ahead and done it without Congress. But it would sure help if Congress went ahead and did it as well. Because right now, since I, 2 years ago, called for a hike in the minimum wage, about 7 million people have seen their incomes go up, but there are still about 21 million people who would stand to benefit if we had a national minimum wage.

And by the way, when you hear folks saying, well, if you raise the minimum wage, that's going to be fewer jobs, it turns out, the States that have raised the minimum wage have had faster job growth than the States that haven't raised the minimum wage. So this is something that would benefit families, but again, if folks have more money in their pockets, they're working hard, they go out and spend it. And that ends up being good for business, not just for the workers involved.

We should be making sure that women are getting paid the same for—as men for doing the same work. That's something, by the way, that should be a no-brainer for men too, because—[*laughter*]—I remember when Michelle and I were both working, I was always happy if she got a raise. I wanted to make sure that she was getting paid the same—fairly because it's all one household, and the more and more women that get into the workforce, the more families are reliant on two incomes in order to make ends meet. Plus it's just fair, and it's the right thing to do.

So there are a number of steps that we can take to make unemployment go down faster, to make sure that wages are rising faster, and that would benefit everybody. And I'll just close with this comment. If you look at American history, the times we grow fastest and do best is when we're growing the economy from the middle out. When middle class families are growing, when working folks can get their way into the middle class, that's when the whole economy does well. When you have an economy where just a few are doing well and a lot of other folks are left, no matter how hard they work, still just scraping to get by, the economy doesn't get the same kind of momentum.

And if you think about what America is about, what the American Dream is about, it's always been that everybody should have opportunity. It shouldn't matter how you started out if you're willing to work hard, if you have good values, if you take responsibility. And that's the kind of economy that we want to build. And we can build it, and manufacturing is going to be right smack dab in the middle of that effort, we've got to continue to build on the success we have. We're not going to rest on our laurels. We're going to keep on going until every single person who wants to find a good job out there can get a good job, and that America is competing against everybody else so that 21st century is the American century, just like the 20th century was.

All right?

Here is how we're going to do this. I'm going to just grab this mike. Anybody who wants to ask a question or make a comment just raise your hand. There are probably some folks with mikes in the audience. Wait for the mike so everybody can hear you. Stand up, introduce yourself. Try to make your questions kind of short, and I'll try to make my answers kind of short. That way we can get more folks in. All right?

All right. Who wants to go first? Oh, and I'll go boy, girl, boy, girl to make sure everybody—[*laughter*]—it's kind of fair, kind of even. All right.

This young man right here. Introduce yourself. Is it working? There you go.

Infrastructure/Smart Grid Technology/Air Traffic Control System

Q. All righty. Thank you for coming out today, President Obama. I'm with the University of Southern Indiana Manufacturing Club out here——

The President. Excellent.

Q. ——and my question for you is, can you share some specifics about the Rebuild America Act? I know you talked a little bit about that.

The President. Well, we have about $2 trillion in deferred maintenance. I don't have to tell you because some of you have probably hit some potholes and tried to figure out what the heck is going on, why aren't we fixing that road? But it's not just the traditional roads and bridges. It's also the infrastructure we don't see: sewer systems, water systems. A lot of them are breaking down. Gas lines that we've been seeing in some big cities, those things start wearing out, suddenly, they actually pose a threat if they explode because they're just not in good shape.

There's a whole bunch of new infrastructure that we should be building. So I'll give you a good example, is our electricity grid. The way we transmit power, if we've got old electricity grids, what happens is a lot of the electricity leaks, a lot of the power leaks in the transmission from the power plant to, let's say, a factory like this one. And the more it leaks, the more that's driving up prices, because it's not as efficient as it should be and it's more vulnerable to blackouts.

And in fact, if we built a smarter power grid, what's called a smart grid means that not only is it not leaking power, but it's also sending power in efficient ways during peak times so that we end up using less energy, which drives down consumer prices and is good for the environment.

I'll give you one other example that I know everybody here will appreciate. We have an old, archaic air traffic control system. Some of you heard about what happened in Chicago. Some guy got mad he was being transferred to Hawaii. Now, let me tell you, I've been to Hawaii. I don't know why he was mad about that. [*Laughter*] He sets fire to some of the facilities there, and suddenly, folks couldn't get in and out of Chicago for a couple of days. In fact, I was in Chicago yesterday—day before yesterday. I had to land in Gary because O'Hare was still somewhat restricted.

But even setting aside that, it turns out that if we revamped our whole air traffic control system, we could reduce the number of delayed flights by about 30 percent. We could reduce the amount of fuel that airlines use by about 30 percent, which means we could lower ticket prices by a whole bunch. It means that you wouldn't have 2-hour waits in the airport. And if you're flying for business, that's going to save you time and money. If you're just trying to get home to see your family, it means time spent with family instead of sitting in an airport, buying stuff that's really expensive. [*Laughter*]

The whole economy would be more efficient if we do it. So the good news is, it's the best time for us to rebuild our infrastructure because there are still a lot of construction workers out of work, a lot of contractors, it's not like they've got so much business, which means they can do the work on time, on—under budget. Interest rates are low. If we spent, let's say, the next 10 years just saying we're just going to rebuild all across America, old infrastructure and new infrastructure, then not only would we give the economy a boost right now, but what we'd also do is lay the foundation for even more economic growth in the future.

It's a smart investment, and we should be doing it. So what I've proposed is, let's close some tax loopholes that exist right now that in some cases are incentivizing companies to send money overseas and profits overseas instead of investing here in the United States of America. Let's close those loopholes that aren't good for creating jobs here. Let's take some of that money, let's use that to rebuild our infrastructure. Makes good sense.

But Congress hasn't done it yet, not because it's not a good idea. Infrastructure is not partisan. That's not Democratic or Republican thing, that's just a commonsense thing. Eisenhower built the Interstate Highway System. Lincoln—first Republican President—helped build the transcontinental railroad. Traditionally, everybody has been in favor of infrastructure because it powers our economy. It's part of what made us an economic superpower. We've got to get back to that kind of mentality.

All right. Young lady right here.

Minimum Wage

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned an increase to the minimum wage. How do you counter an opinion that increasing employee wages would ultimately increase the selling price of goods and services, thus negating any increase to the employee's standard of living?

The President. Yes. No, it's a good question. It's interesting that if you look at the studies that have been done, first of all, most employers pay more than the minimum wage already. Typically, minimum wage are in certain sectors of the economy. They're disproportionately women who are getting paid the minimum wage. But unlike what people think, the majority of folks getting paid the minimum wage are adults, many of them supporting families. The average age of somebody getting paid the minimum wage is 35 years old. They're not 16.

So, in those States, or where you've had one State pass a hike in the minimum wage, State right next door doesn't, and you kind of look at what's happening along the border where you think that people would be kind of influenced—maybe they shop where the prices are cheaper, or businesses would move over to the place where there isn't a minimum wage—it turns out that actually it doesn't have that much of an impact. It has an impact on the families. It generally does not have a huge impact in terms of prices, and it doesn't have an—another argument that's made is folks will hire fewer people because salaries are higher. Well, it turns out, actually, that's not generally what happens. It's just that if everybody has to raise the minimum wage, then everybody adjusts. And in some cases, because of competition, they're not going to be able to raise their prices.

But you're getting to a larger point that I think has plagued the American economy for some time, and that is that business is—has learned how to be really profitable and produce a lot of goods with fewer and fewer workers, partly through automation. And sometimes, that does drive down prices. The problem is, it also drives down wages. And it's driving—driven wages down faster, in many cases, than prices.

I mean, if what you're worried about most is low prices, then presumably, we could have everything made in low-wage countries overseas. They'd get shipped back here, but it doesn't do you any good if a pair of sneakers is really cheap and you don't have a job. So I think the goal here should be prioritizing, number one, making sure people have work; number two, making sure that that work pays well.

And if people have good jobs and they're getting paid a decent wage, then businesses are the ones who have to compete for your business. They're still going to have to keep prices down relatively low because they're going to have to compete for—against other businesses. If they raise their prices too much, somebody is going to come in and offer a better deal. And consumers have gotten better, partly because of the Internet. They know what prices are there.

So there's never been greater competition out there. The problem is right now that all that competition is on the back of workers. Businesses' profits are through the roof. There was a report this week that showed that corporate balance sheets in America are as strong as they've been in history. It's part of the reason why the stock market is doing great. So it's not as if companies don't have some room to pay their workers more. They're just not doing it. And a greater and greater share has been going to the corporate balance sheet, and a—less and less of a share is going to workers.

So don't let folks tell you that companies right now can't afford to provide their workers a raise. The reason they're not giving their workers a raise is because, frankly, they don't have to, because the labor market is still somewhat soft, and people are afraid that, if I leave this job, I may not find something.

The good news is, as the unemployment rate comes down, there are fewer workers looking for jobs, and that means companies have to start bidding up wages a little bit. The market will take care of some of this. But having a minimum wage that is a little bit higher, that's also going to help.

Last example I'll give, by the way, Costco—I assume there are some folks here shopped at Costco before. Costco has the best prices around, right? Starting salary for a cash register operator: $11.50, maybe it's $11.35. Starting wage. And by the way, even before the Affordable Care Act, Costco gave everybody health care. But they've been growing just as fast as folks who don't pay the minimum wage and don't provide health care benefits. Their stock has done great. The difference is they're spreading more of the profits to their workers, which is good for the economy as a whole. And by the way, when you walk into Costco, everybody is pretty cheerful because they're feeling like they're getting a fair deal and that the company cares about them.

All right? Yes. We—here, we've got a mike coming——

Health Care Costs/Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Q. My name is Mihir Paranjabe, I'm the general manager at Millennium Steel. We're very honored to have you. One of the questions I had is about the health care costs. We are seeing almost a double-digit increase in health care costs every year. So do you think that trend is going to go down? And what can we do to control that trend?

The President. I think that's really interesting. You're going to have to talk to Henry because—[*laughter*]—no, no, no, this is serious. The question is whether you guys are doing—whether you guys are shopping effectively enough. Because it turns out that this year, and in fact over the course of the last 4 years, premiums have gone up at the slowest rate in 50 years. So health care premiums have actually slowed down significantly. And it is having an effect both on businesses and families and the Federal debt. Because most of the Federal deficit and the Federal debt, when folks talk about we've got to drive down the debt, we've got to do something about the debt—it turns out that most of the Federal deficit and the Federal debt over the last decade has come from health care costs going up so high, which means Medicare and Medicaid costs start going up. And that's gobbled up a bigger and bigger share of the Federal budget.

Because health care costs are going up much more slowly than expected, so far we anticipate we're going to save about $188 billion over the next 10 years and reduce health care costs.

So the issue now is, what can we do to make sure that you at Millennium are shopping and seeing more competition? Because the only problem with the health care market is, sometimes, it's different in different pockets of the country, depending on how many carriers there are. And what we're trying to do is to make sure that there's more competition driving down cost when it comes to both the businesses who are trying to buy health care for their employees, but also folks who don't get health care on the job and are just having to buy it on their own.

That's part of what the Affordable Care Act is all about. Now, some of you—the Affordable Care Act, by the way, is also known as Obamacare. For a while, everybody was saying—sort of using that as kind of an insult. I'm feeling pretty good about it being called Obamacare. I suspect that about 5 years from now when everybody agrees that it's working, then they won't call it Obamacare anymore. [*Laughter*] That's okay.

But part of the idea—part of what we did there is we set up what's called these marketplaces, these exchanges, where individuals can go online and shop. And as you know, the website was really bad for the first 3 months. It's now in really good shape. We've signed up 10 million people to get health coverage, many times for the first time. And we're giving them tax credits to help lower the cost even more. But we're also setting up a network for businesses to be able to shop for health insurance.

And what's happened—I talked about this yesterday—right now, on average, across America—so it may not be true in every single market, but across America, on average, premiums have—if it had not been for this drop in health care inflation, premiums would probably be about $1,800 higher per family than they actually have turned out to be. Now, you

think about that—$1,800, that's money that's in your pocket that otherwise would be going to you paying for your health care premiums. That's like an $1,800 tax cut for every family that's got health insurance. And that's good news. But we've got to make sure everybody takes advantage of it.

So I'm going to make sure—are you in charge of buying health care? You are? All right, so what I'm going to do is, I'm going to make sure that you talk to some of our health care market folks. I'll bet we can get you a better deal. All right? We'll see if we can save you a little money.

All right, all right. Young lady right here in the jacket.

Rural Economy/Agriculture/Trade/Education/Infrastructure

Q. Good afternoon. My name is Conner Perry. I'm in the eighth grade at the Lexington School in Lexington, Kentucky.

The President. Well, it's so nice to meet you.

Q. Thank you.

The President. How old are you? You're in eighth grade, so you're just tall and pretty, just like Malia and Sasha. There you go.

Q. I was wondering, what are some actions we could take to put people in rural America to work?

The President. That's a great question. The—you know, the rural economy has actually done extremely well compared to the rest of the economy over the last couple of years. The main reason for it, first of all, we've got the best farmers in the world, and we're the most productive agricultural system in the world. So we just—our crops are really good, and we produce a lot. And the weather has been pretty decent. I just talked to my friend—where is Scates? There he is. Runs—good buddy of mine—the Scates farm over on Illinois side. He said best crops he's seen in a while, huh? Ever. So that's the good news.

But what's also helped is that we have increased our agricultural exports, sending our outstanding products overseas at a record pace. And I should introduce, by the way, our Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker is right here. That's Penny. And one of Penny's most important jobs is going around the world and trying to open up new markets for agricultural goods, one of our biggest exports.

And so we've got to keep on making sure that if we have the best crops, the best products at the lowest price, that we can get into these markets. A lot of countries protect their markets and their farmers from competition by closing their markets, and—even though they're selling stuff to us. And my general attitude about trade, I'm a big believer in trade, but my attitude is, it's got to be two way. If we're going to buy your cars or we're going to buy your TV sets or whatever else you're selling, then you've got to be able to buy American wheat and corn and beans. And Penny has done a terrific job. And that's part of the reason why we've seen record exports. And that helps the agricultural economy.

That's number one. But number two, we've also got to diversify the rural economy so it's not just dependent on agriculture. And that means, for example, investing in things like biofuels and clean energy. We are at the threshold of being able to create new energy sources out of food—out of not just crops that we grow—corn and ethanol—but also stuff that we usually throw away, like the corn stalks instead of the corn. And the more we invest in biofuels, clean energy, that can make a big difference in the rural economy.

So that's another area where we can make progress. And then, the rural economy should—just like here in Princeton, we've got to make sure that we are offering up opportunities for manufacturers to come back in to look at some of these rural sites, where you know the people there work hard and quality of life is high, but oftentimes, international investors don't know about some of these rural communities. And so Penny has been helping to advertise. We've got a whole program called SelectUSA, where we go around and we help towns, mayors, county chairmen, it's—local chambers of commerce invite investors from Japan and Singapore and Germany—come invest here in the United States of America.

Because what you want is an economy that isn't just relying on one thing, but it has a bunch of different components to it, so that if, say, you have a bad crop one year, the whole economy of that area doesn't just collapse. And that can make a big difference.

But if we're going to be able to attract investment into rural America, there are at least two things that have to happen. Number one, we've got to invest in education to make sure that the young people in rural America have the skills for today's jobs. And that includes not just K through 12, but also community colleges, which are really a crown jewel. Community colleges can be so powerful in just training folks. They may not go to a 4-year college, but if they can get some technical training, they're suddenly ready for that job. And that is really attractive to investors. If they know they've got good workers in a site, that's one of the most important things they're looking for.

And the second thing is the thing I talked about earlier, which is infrastructure. Part of the problem with rural communities is, they're a little more isolated. All the more important, then, that our rail, our roads, our airports, that they all work, and that they've got broadband connections and Internet connections in order to make sure that they can access international markets.

All right? Great question. All right, got—it's a gentleman's turn. Right here. Right here in front.

The President's Wedding Anniversary

Q. Hello, Mr. President. Thank you for coming. I hope I've got this right: It is your wedding anniversary today?

The President. That is correct.

Q. So happy anniversary to you and Michelle.

The President. Thank you, sir. Thank you. Thank you. Twenty-two years she's been putting up with me. [*Laughter*] The—I had a young man, a friend of mine just got married. And I told the bride—wonderful young lady—I said, "It takes about 10 years to train a man properly." [*Laughter*] "So you've got to be patient with him. Because he's—he'll screw up a bunch, but eventually we learn. It's just it takes us a little longer. We're not as smart." So Michelle has been very patient with me.

Thank you very much. That's very kind of you.

Young lady right here.

Q. Hi, President Obama. I'm from Indiana State University. [*Applause*] Right here. Representing.

The President. Yay, Indiana State!

Coal Industry/Natural Gas/Oil Production/Clean Coal Technologies

Q. I just had a question. Recently, on the media, we have been hearing a lot about the EPA system and the war on coal. What are your feelings on that?

The President. Some of that is—some of it's hype and politics. And that's sort of the nature of our politics these days. But there's a real issue involved. Less and less of our power is coming from coal.

Now a lot of people think that's because of environmental regulations. And the truth of the matter is, is that there's some environmental regulations that have had an impact mainly because what it's said to the power plant operators is, you've got to be more efficient, and you can't send as much pollution into the air. So, if you're using coal, you've got to figure out how can we get smart coal—smart coal technologies that capture some of the pollution that's being sent up, put it underground, store it. Some of that technology is developing, but it's not quite there yet.

But actually, the main reason that power plants in America are using less coal is because natural gas is so cheap. So the real war on coal is natural gas, which, because of new technologies, we are now extracting at a rate that is unbelievable. There's about a hundred years' supply of natural gas underground here in America. We are now the number-one natural gas producer in the world. And by the way, we're also producing more oil than we import for the first time in almost two decades.

So some people don't realize—you know who the number-one oil producer in the world is? It's us, the United States of America. So

we're producing more oil than ever. We're producing more natural gas than ever. And natural gas, we're producing so much that when new power plants get built, it's cheaper for them to run on natural gas than it is on coal. So that obviously causes some hardship in communities that traditionally relied on coal.

There are two things we need to do. Number one is—and my administration has been hugely supportive—we've put a lot of money into developing these new technologies to make sure we can burn coal cleaner than we have. And the second thing that we need to do is to make sure that some of the new opportunities in clean energy and in natural gas and other energy-related industries, that they locate in places that used to have coal or used to be primarily coal country.

And because the trend lines are going to be inevitable. Because if you burn coal in a dirty way, that's going to cause more and more pollution, including pollution that causes climate change. You're going to see more and more restrictions on the use of coal not just here in the United States, but around the world, which means that we've got to get out in front of that and make sure that we've got the technologies to use coal cheaply. And we've got to be able to send those technologies to other counties that are still burning coal.

Because there are going to be countries like China and India and others that still use coal for years to come. They're poor, and they're building a lot of power plants quickly. They don't have as much natural gas as us, so they're going to be interested in figuring out, how can they use their coal supplies and how can they import our coal. But if we're doing a good job giving them technologies that allow them to burn it cleanly, then it's a win-win for us. Not only are we able to then sell coal to them, but we're also selling the technology to help them burn it in the cleanest way possible.

We've been making those investments, and we've got to keep on making those investments in order for us to get ahead of the curve. All right?

Great question.

All right. Gentleman back there in the tie. There aren't that many ties in here, so there you go.

Manufacturing Industry/Research and Development/Advanced Manufacturing Hubs/National Manufacturing Day

Q. Thank you. Hi, Mr. President. My name is Ed Youdell, I'm with the Fabricators and Manufacturers Association. We're one of the founding partners of Manufacturing Day, so thank you for your support.

The President. Thank you.

Q. I'd like to ask you about R&D. U.S. manufacturers do more R&D than any country in the world. It makes us productive. It makes us innovative. Could you talk about policies and ideas to continue to support R&D activities to promote and accelerate manufacturing? Thank you.

The President. The—when we think about manufacturing, we always think about the traditional guy with the hard hat and the glasses, and there are sparks flying, and it's noisy. And these days you go into a manufacturing plant like this one, first of all, it's clean, it's quiet, and so much of it is running on computers and automation and new systems. So, if we're going to stay competitive in manufacturing, we've got some terrific advantages.

Energy, by the way, is one of our biggest advantages because we have some of the cheapest energy in the world. That's part of why a lot of companies want to relocate here in the United States. But we've also got to stay ahead of the curve in the new technologies for the new kinds of manufacturing. Every budget I've submitted has called for an increase in our R&D budget, our research and development budget. And we've specifically been interested in putting more money into research and development in manufacturing.

So, in fact, today I announced the fifth—the proposal for the fifth manufacturing hub that we're creating. We want to actually create about 15 more of them after this. And what it's doing is, it's linking manufacturers with universities and researchers to start developing some

of the new technologies that we know are going to be key to the future.

So, for example, we already created a manufacturing hub around 3–D printing. Everybody know what 3–D printing is? It's actually pretty interesting. So, basically, the idea is, is that using software, you can manufacture just about anything from a remote location just by you send the program to some site and then the machine builds whatever it is that you designed on the computer from scratch. And we know that over time, this is going to be more and more incorporated in the manufacturing process. But we want to make sure that all that stuff is done right here in the United States of America. So we created a hub for that.

Today I'm announcing a $100 million competition to create a new hub around photonics—I had to ask Penny to make sure I pronounced it right. But this is basically the science, the technology around light which is used to transmit data and information and also is used in the manufacturing process for everything from lasers to some of the stuff that the Department of Defense is doing.

And what these hubs allow us to do is, instead of having a slower process where somebody in some lab coat somewhere figures something out and then writes a report on it, and then maybe 5 years later, some manufacturer says, "Huh, I wonder if I could tinker around with that and use that in my manufacturing process," you have a system where the businesses and the researchers are working on it at the same time, which speeds up the discovery process and means we're moving from discovery to application a lot faster.

Now, Germany has about 60 of these manufacturing hubs, and so far I've been able to create five of them—or four of them. This is going to be the fifth. And as I said, I want us to make sure we're doing a lot more than that.

So that's just one example of why our investment in manufacturing research and development is going to be so critically important. It allows us to keep our lead, because America has always been the top innovator in the world. That's the reason why our economy historically has done so well, is because we invent stuff faster and better than anybody else. And if we lose that lead, we're going to be in trouble.

Can I just say one last thing about—because I appreciate you working on this National Manufacturers Day. For the young people here and anybody who is listening, the reason we set up this National Manufacturing Day is because too many young people do not understand the opportunities that exist in manufacturing.

Because so many plants were shut down and so much offshoring was taking place, I think a lot of people just kind of gave up on the idea of working in manufacturing. The problem is that for a lot of young people, manufacturing offers great opportunities.

There's a statistic—I was in Wisconsin, somebody told me an amazing statistic, which is, the average age of a skilled tool-and-die operator in Wisconsin is 59 years old. Now, these folks are making 25, 30 bucks an hour, benefits. You are solidly middle class if you have one of these jobs. And the workforce is getting older and older in that area, and young people aren't coming in to replace them.

So the idea behind National Manufacturing Day, we got 50,000 young people going into factories all across the country and learning about, look at all the jobs that you can get in manufacturing: engineering jobs, but also jobs on the line, technical jobs. All of them require some skills. All of them require some higher level learning. But not all of them require a 4-year degree. You could make a good living. So that's part of what we're trying to encourage: getting young people to reorient.

And we're actually also talking to high schools, saying to them, try to encourage young people to think about manufacturing as a career option. Because not everybody wants to sit behind a desk, pushing paper all day long. And different people have different aptitudes and different talents and different interests. And if we can set up a situation where high schools are starting to connect to manufacturing, then a lot of young people can start getting apprenticeships early, realize how interesting some of that work is. Then they have a better idea, if they do end up going to college, it's a little

more focused around the things that they're actually going to need in order to succeed in manufacturing.

So thank you for participating in that. It's really important.

All right. We've got—how much more time do we have? I just want to make sure I'm not—we'll make it two. We'll make it two. All right, young lady right there. Yes, right—you, yes. All right, hold on, let's make sure we get the microphone here.

Wage Equality/Childcare/Workplace Flexibility

Q. Hi. My name is Faith Cooper. I am a secondary English education student at USI. And I just want to say thank you for coming here today. It's such an honor to hear you speak.

Being in the job force in the next couple of years, I am worried about equal pay as a woman. So you've talked a little bit about that. How can we get there? What can we do to get equal pay for women?

The President. Well, it's a great question. Here's the statistics, first of all. Women, on average, make 77 cents for every dollar a man makes. Now, what folks will tell you sometimes is you can't really compare the situation because a lot of women by choice end up working less when they have kids and decide to stay home, and so it's not the same thing. But here's the problem. It turns out that actually in a lot of companies sometimes it's still the case that women are getting paid less than men for doing the exact same job.

And so one of the first bills I signed was called the Lilly Ledbetter bill. And Lilly, who is a friend of mine, she was doing a job for 25 years and about 20 years into it just happened to find out that for that whole time she had been getting paid less for doing the exact same job that a man had been doing. And when she tried to sue to get her backpay, the Court said, well, it's too late now because the statute of limitations had run out. She said, well, I just found out. That doesn't matter.

So we changed that law, and that was the first thing that we did. And what we've also done is, through executive action, what I've said is any Federal contractor who does business with the Federal Government, you've got to allow people to compare their salaries so that they can get information about whether they're getting paid fairly or not.

There is a fair pay bill that is before Congress, but so far it's been blocked by the House Republicans. It hasn't come up for a vote. We need to keep putting pressure on them to get this done. This is just a matter of basic fairness. I don't think my daughters should be treated any different than somebody else's sons if they're doing a good job. They should get paid the same.

But it's also a matter of economics, as I said before. More and more women are the key breadwinner in their family, and if they're getting paid less, that whole family suffers. So this is something that we have to take care.

I do want to mention, though, going back to the first argument, people saying that women make different choices when they have children. Well, part of the reason they have to make different choices is because we don't have a good childcare system. It's because we don't have a good family leave policy. A child gets sick; you need to take care of a sick child. You can get unpaid leave under the Family Medical Leave Act. But what if you can't afford to give up that paycheck that day? Or you've got an ailing parent; they have to go to the doctor one day. They don't drive. You need to drive them. You need a day off. But if you take the day off, now you can't pay your rent.

So there are family-friendly policies that we could put in place, and some States are doing so: improving childcare, especially early childhood education, by the way, which we know every dollar we invest in that makes our kids do better in school the whole way. So it's good for our education system, but it's also just good for parents.

Somebody mentioned my wedding anniversary. I can tell you the toughest time when we were married was when our kids were still small and I was working and Michelle was working. And sometimes, I'd be out of town, and the babysitter doesn't show up, and suddenly, Michelle is having scramble. And I

promise you when I get home, it's rough. [*Laughter*]

But we were actually—we were professionals. We were both lawyers. We were in a better position to get help than most families, but it was still hard. So the more we do on early childhood education, high-quality day care, making it affordable for families, family leave, those family-friendly policies that will help make sure that women are able to take care of their families and pursue their professional careers and bring home the kind of paycheck that they deserve—we need to do both. It's not a choice between one or the other. We have to do all those things.

I've got time for one more question. Gentleman, right here in the blue.

Minimum Wage/Economy

Q. Mr. President, I would like to thank you also for visiting. My name is Randy Perry, this young lady's father. I do have a small manufacturing company in rural America. But how do you speak to us small manufacturers that want to raise the minimum wage, but we have to compete?

The President. Well, as I said before, the first thing we need to do is to make sure that the economy as a whole is strong because, remember what I said? When the economy is strong as a whole, there is more demand for workers. That gives workers more leverage to get pay raises. The same is true for businesses. When demand is high for whatever product you're producing, then you can afford to charge a little bit more.

And the truth of the matter is, is that for a lot of small businesses, there's going to be more pressure than large businesses when it comes to wages because you just don't have as much margin for error. But overall, our economy is going to do better and small businesses do better when there is greater demand out there for products and services. And there's greater demand for products and services if people have money in their pockets.

And one of the biggest problems we have in our economy right now—and this includes one of the biggest problems for small businesses—is that when a bigger and bigger share goes to folks at the top, a lot of that money, they just don't spend.

I had lunch with Bill Gates the other day. Now, Bill Gates has got a lot of money. [*Laughter*] And he's doing great things with it, by the way, doing great charitable work. But the truth of the matter is, is that if Bill Gates gets an extra million dollars, it's not like he's going to spend more money on food or go and buy an extra car or buy a new refrigerator, because he's already got everything he needs.

But if somebody who is a low-wage worker gets a raise, first thing they're going to do is they're going to spend it, maybe on a new backpack for the kids or finally trade in that old beater for a new car. And that drives the economy. It picks it up. It boosts it. And when that happens, then more demand exists for services and goods. And that means that all businesses are going to do better, including small businesses. And that then gives you the higher profits, which then allows you to pay your workers a little bit more. You get in this virtuous cycle.

And this is part of the argument that I've been having with my good friends in the Republican Party for quite some time. If you look at the policies we've been pursuing and proposing—investing in research and development, rebuilding our infrastructure, making sure that college is more affordable, improving childcare, fair pay legislation, increase the minimum wage—I can point to evidence that shows that that's going to put more money in the pockets of middle class families. That's going to increase growth at a faster pace, and the economy as a whole is going to do better.

And their main response to me typically is two things. One is, they'll say we've got to get rid of regulations. Except the problem is, for example, the last big crisis we had was precisely because we didn't have enough regulations on Wall Street, and folks were selling a bunch of junk on the market and doing reckless things that ended up costing everybody something.

And then, the other—the second argument that they make is we need more tax cuts for folks like me who make a pretty good living,

folks at the top. And I've got to tell you, there's no evidence that that's going to help middle class families. There's no evidence for this trickle-down theory that somehow another tax cut for folks who are already making out like bandits over the last 20 years is going to somehow improve the prospects for ordinary families. It just doesn't exist. They keep on repeating it, but they don't show that that's actually going to help the economy. That's not going to help you. It's not going to help you. And it's not going to help Millennium. And it's not going to help your business.

I made a speech yesterday at Northwestern, and what I just said is just look at the facts. Since I've been President, unemployment has gone from—is down from 10 percent, down to now 5.9. The deficit has been cut by more than half. Our energy production is higher than it's ever been. Our health care costs are slowing. More people have insurance. High school dropout rate has gone down. Graduation rate has gone up. College attendance rate has gone up. Our production of clean energy has doubled. Solar energy has gone up tenfold. Wind energy has gone up threefold. Exports—we export more than we ever have in history. Corporate balance sheets are doing great. Stock market, alltime highs. Housing market beginning to recover. There's almost no economic measure by which the economy as a whole isn't doing significantly better than it was when I came into office.

Now, that's—[*applause*]—those are just facts. You can look them up. I'm not making it up. That's one thing about being President: If I stand here and say it, all these folks are filming me, so they'll go and check. [*Laughter*] So that's the truth. But what is also true is that wages and incomes have continued to be flat even though the economy is growing and businesses are making more money. So what that tells me is, the one thing that's holding things back, the one thing that people are still concerned about, and the one thing that if we could change would really give more confidence to the economy and boost it, is if wages and incomes start going up a little bit.

If all the productivity and profits, if we start sharing that a little bit more with more folks, and ordinary families start feeling like they've got a little bit of a cushion, that will be good for everybody. Because that's the one thing that really we haven't seen as much improvement on as we need. And so what everybody should be asking is, how do we increase wages, how do we increase incomes? Because if we do that, things are going to better.

And there are pretty much just a handful of ways to do it. Number one, you make the economy grow even faster so the labor market gets tighter. Number two, you pursue policies like a higher minimum wage or making sure that families are able to get childcare, you're driving down health care costs, the kinds of things that affect people's pocketbooks directly. Those are the things that I've been pursuing since I've been President. And those are the things I'll continue to pursue as long as I have this great privilege of being President.

Thank you so much, everybody. God bless you. Appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:17 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Henry Jackson, chief executive officer, Millennium Steel Service, LLC; Naperville, IL, contractor Brian Howard, who allegedly set fire to the Chicago Air Route Traffic Control Center in Aurora, IL; Patrick Scates, general manager, Scates Valley Irrigation, and former aide to the President during his tenure as U.S. Senator; Lilly Ledbetter, former employee, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. plant in Gadsden, AL; and William H. Gates III, chairman, Microsoft Corp. The related Proclamation 9184 of October 2 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Observance of the Hajj and Eid al-Adha
October 3, 2014

Michelle and I would like to extend our best wishes to Muslims in the United States and around the world who are celebrating Eid al-Adha and to congratulate those performing the Hajj this year.

As our Muslim neighbors and friends gather for Eid celebrations, Muslim Americans are among the millions of pilgrims joining one of the world's largest and most diverse gatherings. Hajj brings together Muslims from around the world—Sunni and Shiite—to share in reverent prayer, side by side. It serves as a reminder that no matter one's tribe or sect, race or religion, gender or age, we are equals in humanity.

On Eid, Muslims continue the tradition of donating to the poor and joining efforts with other faith communities in providing assistance to those suffering from hunger, sickness, oppression, and conflict. Their service is a powerful example of the shared roots of the world's Abrahamic faiths and how our communities can come together in shared peace, with dignity and a sense of justice.

On behalf of the American people, we extend our warmest greetings during this holiday. May the prayers of peace made by the Hajj pilgrims and those of all faiths around the world be heard and granted. *Eid Mubarak*.

Statement on the Death of Alan Henning
October 3, 2014

The United States strongly condemns the brutal murder of United Kingdom citizen Alan Henning by the terrorist group ISIL. Mr. Henning worked to help improve the lives of the Syrian people and his death is a great loss for them, for his family, and the people of the United Kingdom. Standing together with our U.K. friends and allies, we will work to bring the perpetrators of Alan's murder—as well as the murders of Jim Foley, Steven Sotloff, and David Haines—to justice. Standing together with a broad coalition of allies and partners, we will continue taking decisive action to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL.

NOTE: The statement referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The President's Weekly Address
October 4, 2014

Hi, everybody. I'm at Millennium Steel in Princeton, Indiana, to have a town hall with workers on National Manufacturing Day. Because in many ways, manufacturing is the quintessential middle class job. And after a decade of losing jobs, American manufacturing is once again adding them, more than 700,000 over the past 4½ years.

In fact, it's been a bright spot as we keep fighting to recover from the great recession. Last month, our businesses added 236,000 new jobs. The unemployment rate fell to under 6 percent for the first time in more than 6 years. Over the past 55 months, our businesses have added 10.3 million new jobs. That's the longest uninterrupted stretch of private sector job creation in our history. And we're on pace to make 2014 the strongest year of job growth since the 1990s.

This progress has been hard, but it has been steady, and it is real. It is a direct result of the American people's drive and determination and the decisions made by my administration.

During the last decade, people thought the decline in American manufacturing was inevitable. But we chose to invest in the American

auto industry and American workers. Today, an auto industry that was flatlining 6 years ago is building and selling new cars at the fastest pace in 8 years. American manufacturing is growing almost twice as fast as the rest of the economy, with new factories opening their doors at the fastest pace in decades. That's progress we can be proud of.

What's also true is that too many families still work too many hours with too little to show for it. And the much longer and profound erosion of middle class jobs and incomes isn't something we're going to reverse overnight. But there are ideas that we should be putting into place that would grow jobs and wages faster right now. And one of the best would be to raise the minimum wage.

We've actually begun to see some modest wage growth in recent months, but most folks still haven't seen a raise in over a decade. It's time to stop punishing some of the hardest working Americans. It's time to raise the minimum wage. It would put more money in workers' pockets. It would help 28 million Americans. Recent surveys show that a majority of small-business owners support a gradual increase to $10.10 an hour. The folks who keep blocking a minimum wage increase are running out of excuses. Let's give America a raise.

Let's do this, because it would make our economy stronger and make sure that growth is shared. Rather than just reading about our recovery in a headline, more people will feel it in their own lives. And that's when America does best. We do better when the middle class does better, and when more Americans have their way to climb into the middle class.

And that's what drives me every single day. Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:25 p.m. on October 3 at Millennium Steel Service, LLC, in Princeton, IN, for broadcast on October 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 3, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 4. The related Proclamation 9184 of October 2 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Dedication Ceremony for the American Veterans Disabled For Life Memorial

October 5, 2014

Thank you so much. Good afternoon. Please be seated. To all our disabled veterans—our extraordinary wounded warriors—we gather here today, on this gorgeous autumn day in America, because each of you endured a moment that shaped the arc of your lives and that speaks to our debt as a nation.

Maybe it was there on the battlefield, as the bullets and shrapnel rained down around you. Maybe it was as you lay there, the medics tending to your wounds. Perhaps it was days or months later, in that hospital room, when you finally came to. Perhaps it was years later, as you went about your day, or in the midnight hour, when the memories came rushing back like a flood.

Wherever you were, whatever your story, it was the moment that binds each of you forever, that moment of realization that life would not be the same. Your foot. Your hand. Your arm. Your leg, maybe both. Your sight. Your peace of mind. A part of you was gone.

Speaking to his fellow veterans of the Civil War, the great Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., once said, "As I look into your eyes I feel . . . that a great trial in your youth made you different . . . different from what we could have been without it." And he said, we learned "a lesson early which has given a different feeling to life," a sense of duty that burns like a fire in the heart.

To Lois Pope, Art Wilson, and everyone at the Memorial Foundation and our incredible veterans service organizations who devoted so many years of effort, especially our friends at the Disabled American Veterans; to all the

architects and craftspeople who lent your talents to bring this memorial to life; Members of Congress, Secretaries Jewell and McDonald; distinguished guests; and most of all, to our veterans who have come to know "a different feeling to life," and to your families: It's a great honor to be with you here today.

For more than two centuries, Americans have left everything they have known and loved—their families and their friends—and stepped forward to serve: to win our independence, to preserve our Union, to defend our democracy, to keep safe this country that we love. And when the guns fall silent, our veterans return home, ready to play their part in the next chapter of our American story. As a nation, we have not always fulfilled our obligations to those who served in our name. This is a painful truth. And few have known this better than our veterans wounded in war.

In the first years after our Revolution, when our young Nation still resisted the idea of a standing army, veterans of the Continental Army returned to towns that could be indifferent to their service. One veteran, his hand mangled by a British musketball, was deemed, like many veterans, as "unfit for labor." And frustrated by his inability to secure a disability pension, he wrote that "many of those who aided in conquering the enemy are suffering under the most distressing poverty." After the Civil War, and again after the First World War, our disabled veterans had to organize and march for the benefits they had earned. Down the decades, our Nation has worked to do better, to do right by these patriots. Because in the United States of America, those who have fought for our freedom should never be shunned and should never be forgotten.

So today we take another step forward. With this memorial, we commemorate, for the first time, the two battles our disabled veterans have fought: the battle over there and the battle here at home, your battle to recover, which at times can be even harder and certainly is longer. You walk these quiet grounds, pause by the pictures of these men and women—you look into their eyes, read their words—and we're somehow able to join them on a journey that speaks to the endurance of the American spirit. And to you, our veterans and wounded warriors, we thank you for sharing your journey with us.

Here we feel your fears: the shock of that first moment when you realized something was different, the confusion about what would come next, the frustrations and the worries, as one veteran said, "that maybe I wouldn't be quite the same."

And then, here we see your resolve: your refusal, in the face of overwhelming odds, to give in to despair or to cynicism; your decision, your choice, to overcome. Like the veteran who said, "It's possible for a man to lose half his physical being and still become whole."

It is here we can see your perseverance: your unyielding faith that tomorrow can be better; your relentless determination, often through years of hard recovery and surgeries and rehab, learning the simple things all over again—how to button a shirt or how to write your name, in some cases, how to talk or how to walk; and how, when you've stumbled, when you've fallen, you've picked yourself up, you've carried on, you've never given up.

Here we get a glimpse of the wounds within, the veteran who says, "I relive the war every day." Because no matter what war you served in, and whether they called it "shell shock" or "battle fatigue" or the hundred—"1,000-yard stare" or posttraumatic stress, you know that the unseen wounds of war are just as real as any other, and they can hurt just as much, if not more.

Here we're reminded that none of you have made this journey alone. Beside each of you is a wife or a husband, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, and neighbors and friends, who day after day, year after year, have been there, lifting you up, pushing you further, rooting you on, like the caregiver who said: "I love him for who he was in his heart. And he still had that." Today we salute all your families and the love that never quits.

And finally, here we see that our wounded veterans are defined not by what you can't do, but by what you can do. Just ask Captain Dawn

Halfaker. In Iraq, her Humvee was hit by an RPG. She suffered burns and broken bones, lost her right arm. She struggled physically and emotionally. But with the help of her fellow wounded warriors, she came to focus, she said, "not on what I had lost, but on what I still had." And today, what she has is the respect of her fellow veterans that she mentors; a business of her own, one that hires veterans; and a beautiful 6-month-old son. Dawn's picture—this member of the 9/11 generation—now graces this memorial, and we are honored that she is here today. And, Dawn, please stand up.

I've seen Dawn's story over and over and over again, in all the wounded warriors and veterans that I have the honor to meet, from Walter Reed to Bethesda to Bagram. I know in Dawn's life, many of you see your own. Today I want every American to see it: how, after everything you endured, after all the loss, you summoned the best in yourself and found your strength again; how many of you learned to walk again and stand again and run again; how you've competed in races and marathons and the Paralympics on Team U.S.A.; how you found joy and love, getting married, raising children; how you found new ways to serve, returning to your units or starting new businesses or teaching our children or serving your fellow veterans or leading in your communities.

America, if you want to know what real strength is, if you want to see the character of our country, a country that never quits, look at these men and women. And I'd ask all of our disabled veterans here today, if you can stand, please stand; if not, please raise your hand so that our Nation can pay tribute to your service. We thank you, we are inspired by you, and we honor you.

From this day forward, Americans will come to this place and ponder the immense sacrifice made on their behalf, the heavy burden borne by a few so that we might live in freedom and peace. Of course, our reflection is not enough. Our expressions of gratitude are not enough.

Here, in the heart of our Nation's Capital, this memorial is a challenge to all of us, a reminder of "the obligations this country is under." And if we are to truly honor these veterans, we must heed the voices that speak to us here. Let's never rush into war, because it is America's sons and daughters who bear the scars of war for the rest of their lives. Let us only send them into harm's way when it's absolutely necessary. And if we do, let's always give them the strategy and the mission and the support that they need to get the job done. When the mission is over—as our war in Afghanistan comes to a responsible end in 2 months—let us stand united as Americans and welcome our veterans home with the thanks and respect they deserve.

And if they come home having left a part of themselves on the battlefield, on our behalf, this memorial tells us what we must do. When our wounded veterans set out on that long road of recovery, we need to move heaven and earth to make sure they get every single benefit, every single bit of care that they have earned, that they deserve.

If they're hurting and don't know if they can go on, we need to say loud and clear, as family and friends, as neighbors and coworkers, as fellow citizens, and as a nation: You are not alone, it's all right to ask for help, and we're here to help you be strong again. Because our wounded warriors may have "a different feeling to life," but when we are truly there for them, when we give them every opportunity to succeed and continue their enormous contributions to our country, then our whole Nation is stronger, and all our lives are richer.

So, if you're an American and you see a veteran—maybe with a prosthetic arm or leg, maybe burns on their face—don't ever look away. Do not turn away. You go up, and you reach out, and you shake their hand, and you look them in the eye, and you say those words every veteran should hear all the time: "Welcome home. Thank you. We need you more than ever. You help us stay strong; you helped us stay free."

To every wounded warrior, to every disabled veteran: Thank you. God bless you. God bless these United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:21 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Lois P. Pope,

cofounder and chairman, and Arthur H. Wilson, cofounder and president, American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial; Santa Fe, NM, resident Michael Naranjo, an Army veteran wounded by a grenade blast during the Vietnam war; Jayme Bozik, wife of Sgt. Joseph Bozik, USA, a paratrooper in the 82d Airborne Division who lost his right arm and both legs from an antitank mine explosion in Iraq in October 2004; and Dawn Halfaker, member of the board of directors, Wounded Warrior Project, and president and chief executive officer, Halfaker & Associates, LLC, and her son Raice.

Remarks Following a Meeting on the United States Response to the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa and an Exchange With Reporters
October 6, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. I just had an opportunity to get a full briefing from my entire team across administrations—across agencies on the aggressive steps that we are taking to fight the Ebola epidemic, to stop the epidemic at its source in West Africa, but also to make sure that we are doing everything we need to do to prevent an outbreak here in the United States.

As I've said from the start of this outbreak, I consider this a top national security priority. This is not just a matter of charity, although obviously, the humanitarian toll in countries that are affected in West Africa is extraordinarily significant. This is an issue about our safety. It is also an issue with respect to the political stability and the economic stability of this region.

And so it is very important for us to make sure that we are treating this the same way that we would treat any other significant national security threat. And that's why we've got an all-hands-on-deck approach. From DOD to public health, to our development assistance, our science teams, everybody is putting in time and effort to make sure that we are addressing this as aggressively as possible.

I know that the American people are concerned about the possibility of an Ebola outbreak, and Ebola is a very serious disease. And the ability of people who are infected, who could carry that across borders, is something that we have to take extremely seriously. At the same time, it is important for Americans to know the facts, and that is that because of the measures that we've put in place, as well as our world-class health system and the nature of the Ebola virus itself, which is difficult to transmit, the chances of an Ebola outbreak in the United States is extremely low.

Procedures are now in place to rapidly evaluate anybody who might be showing symptoms. We saw that with the response of the airplane in Newark and how several hospitals across the United States have been testing for possible cases. In recent months, we've had thousands of travelers arriving here from West Africa. And so far, only one case of Ebola has been diagnosed in the United States, and that's the patient in Dallas. Our prayers are obviously with him and his family.

We have learned some lessons, though, in terms of what happened in Dallas. We don't have a lot of margin for error. The procedures and protocols that are put in place must be followed. One of the things that we discussed today was how we could make sure that we're spreading the word across hospitals, clinics, any place where a patient might first come in contact with a medical worker, to make sure that they know what to look out for and they're putting in place the protocols and following those protocols strictly. And so we're going to be reaching out not only to Governors and mayors and public health officials in States all across the country, but we want to continue to figure out how we can get the word out everywhere so that everybody understands exactly what is needed to be done.

Meanwhile, at the Federal level, we're constantly reviewing and evaluating the measures that we already have in place to see if there are

additional improvements. We continue to look at any additional steps that can be taken to make sure that the American people are safe, which is our highest priority.

And finally, we had a discussion about what we're doing on site in West Africa. There's been already extraordinary work done by the Department of Defense, in conjunction with the CDC, in standing up isolation units and hospital beds. We are making progress. The environment is difficult because the public health system there has very few resources and is already extraordinarily fragile.

And I'll be very honest with you: Although we have seen great interest on the part of the international community, we have not seen other countries step up as aggressively as they need to. And I said at the United Nations, and I will repeat, that this is an area where everybody has to chip in and everybody has to move quickly in order for us to get this under control. Countries that think that they can sit on the sidelines and just let the United States do it, that will result in a less effective response, a less speedy response. And that means that people die, and it also means that the potential spread of the disease beyond these areas in West Africa becomes more imminent.

So I'm going to be putting a lot of pressure on my fellow heads of state and government around the world to make sure that they are doing everything that they can to join us in this effort. We've got some small countries that are punching above their weight on this, but we've got some large countries that aren't doing enough. And we want to make sure that they understand that this is not a disease that's going to discriminate, and this is something that all of us have to be involved in.

So the bottom line is, is that we're doing everything that we can to make sure, number one, that the American people are safe; I'm confident that we're going to be able to do that. But we're also going to need to make sure that we stop this epidemic at its source. And we're profoundly grateful to all our personnel—our medical personnel, our development personnel, our military personnel—who are serving in this effort. It's because of their professionalism, their dedication, their skill that we are going to be able to get this under control. But this is a faraway place, with roads that in many cases are impassable, areas that don't have even one hospital. We're having to stand up, essentially, a public health infrastructure in many of these areas that haven't had it before, and that requires enormous amount of effort.

I'm very grateful for the people who are on the frontlines making this work. It's a reminder once again of American leadership. But even with all the dedicated effort that our American personnel are putting in, there are going to be—they need to be joined by professionals from other countries who are putting up similar effort and similar resources. And so I hope they're going to be paying attention over the next several weeks so we can get on top of this. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

Domestic Preparedness and Containment Efforts

Q. What do you say to the American people who remain so nervous in spite of your assurances?

The President. Well, I just explained to them that the nature of this disease—the good news is, is that it's not an airborne disease. We are familiar with the protocols that are needed to isolate and greatly reduce the risks of anybody catching this disease, but it requires us to follow those protocols strictly, and that's exactly what we are in the process of doing. And the CDC is familiar with dealing with infectious diseases and viruses like this. We know what has to be done, and we've got the medical infrastructure to do it. But this is an extraordinarily virulent disease when you don't follow the protocols.

And so the key here is just to make sure that each step along the way—whether it's a hospital admissions desk, whether it is the doctors, the nurses, public health officials—that everybody has the right information. If they have the right information and they're following those protocols, then this is something that we're going to be able to make sure does not have the kind of impact here in the United States that a lot of people are worried about. But that

requires everybody to make sure that they stay informed. Most particularly, we've got to make sure that our health workers are informed.

We're also going to be working on protocols to do additional passenger screening, both at the source and here in the United States. All of these things make me confident that here in the United States, at least, the chances of an outbreak, of an epidemic here, are extraordinarily low.

But let's keep in mind that, as we speak, there are children on the streets dying of this disease, thousands of them. And so, obviously, my first job is to make sure that we're taking care of the American people, but we have a larger role than that. We also have an obligation to make sure that those children and their families are safe as well, because ultimately, the best thing we can do for our public health is also to extend the kind of empathy, compassion, and effort so that folks in those countries as well can be rid of this disease. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

Q. Are you looking to the private sector——

The President. A lot of volunteering. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:04 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas E. Duncan, a Liberian man diagnosed with Ebola in Dallas, TX.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser
October 6, 2014

Thank you! Well, calling José a cook is like calling Michael Jordan a basketball player. [*Laughter*] I mean, anybody who has had a chance to eat at his restaurants knows that his food is outstanding, but more importantly, for those of you who know José, this is somebody who is the quintessential American success story and has consistently given back time and time and time again to help feed people and help provide opportunities to folks who otherwise wouldn't have it. And Michelle loves him, and I love him, and he's just a great, great friend and a great fellow citizen. So please give José a big round of applause. I'm just resentful I'm not staying for dinner. [*Laughter*]

We also have here and I want to acknowledge the woman who's going to be the next mayor of DC, Muriel Bowser. Where's Muriel? Stand up. She had to go? She had to go? Well, I love her anyway. She had to go campaign. She's already got votes here.

I'm going to be very brief at the top, and then what I want to do is spend most of the time in a discussion with all of you. Obviously, the headlines right now are dominated by what's happening overseas. We have a deadly terrorist organization, ISIL, that poses a significant threat to the stability of the Middle East and ultimately poses a threat to us. And we've been able to organize an international coalition to start taking them on, and that's going to be a process of us rolling back some of the gains they've made. But because of the unity that we've seen not only in the Arab world, but also around the world, I'm confident we're going to be able to get that accomplished.

We're spending a lot of time working on Ebola. And although I know there are understandable fears here in the United States, we're very confident that the chances of an outbreak here are exceedingly low. On the other hand, this speaks to the broader need for us to build a public health infrastructure around the world so that when epidemics like this happen, that we're able to catch it at the source quickly, save lives, but also make sure that the American people are safe. And so, once again, Americans are showing leadership in addressing this crisis.

We have been critical in mobilizing the world community to blunt Russian aggression in Ukraine. And so, across the board, when I was at the United Nations, I think there was a display of the fact that America remains the one indispensable nation, and when there are problems around the world, folks generally don't call Moscow or Beijing, they call us. And they expect that we're going to be able to stand

with them in moments of need and that we'll stand for principles and ideals that helped build our country and helped create the kind of growing prosperity around the world that I think too many folks take for granted, but has been an extraordinary achievement for humankind over the last several decades.

But what I want to mainly focus on just briefly is what's happening here at home. I gave a speech last week at Northwestern University in which I argued—not based on opinion, but based on fact—that there's almost no economic measure by which we are not doing better now than we were when I came into office.

Unemployment has now dropped from over 10 percent down to 5.9 percent, one of the fastest drops in a year, by the way, that we've seen in the last 30. We've seen manufacturing stronger than any time since the 1990s and the auto industry has come back. We have seen the deficit cut by more than half, and part of that is because not only have we been able to provide 10 million people health insurance that didn't have it before, but we've actually slowed health care inflation to the point where it's now estimated that Medicare will save $188 billion over 10 years, not by cutting benefits to seniors who need it, but rather, because we are starting to have a smarter health care system that is delivering higher quality at lower cost.

On the education front, we've seen the high school dropout rate go down, college enrollment rate go up, reading scores and math scores going up. On issues of crime, this is the first time in 40 years where the Federal prison population and the crime rate has gone down at the same time because of smarter policies that we're putting in place in collaboration with State and local governments.

On energy, we now produce more oil and natural gas than ever before. We are actually producing more oil than we import for the first time in almost two decades. And we've doubled clean energy, producing 3 times as much wind energy than we've ever produced and about 10 times as much as we were producing when I first came into office, all of which has meant that we have reduced carbon emissions by a greater amount than any other country on Earth. In fact, we've actually produced more jobs here in the United States, 10 million in the last—over 10 million over the last 55 months—more jobs than Japan, Europe, and every other industrialized country combined, which gives you some sense of the progress that we've made.

But here's the catch. Despite all this, despite the fact that the stock market is booming, despite the fact that corporate balance sheets—not according to me, but according to Bloomberg—are at their strongest that they've been essentially in the postwar era, despite all that, people, I think, remain concerned about the economy. And why is that? Well, the reason is because wages and income have not gone up at the same pace as growth has gone up and unemployment has come down. And it speaks to an issue that for decades now we've been wrestling with, and that is the fact that a smaller and smaller share of the wealth and income and productivity that is generated by this economy is going to the vast majority of people. And so they worry about their futures, and more importantly, they worry about their kids' futures.

And as I said at Northwestern, some of these are long-term trends. They're not going to be reversed overnight, but there's some things we know would make a difference. We know that if we invested in rebuilding our infrastructure around the country that we would put not only construction workers to work, not just engineers and others who work on the project, but we would grow the economy generally at a faster clip, which means unemployment would come down faster and it would tighten the labor markets, which means wages would start going up.

We know that an increase in the minimum wage is something that the majority of Americans agree with, a majority of small businesses thing is a good idea, because they understand that if people have more money in their pockets, they spend more, and that's good for business ultimately. We know that fair pay laws, equal pay for equal work, is not just good for

women, it's good for families, and ultimately, it's good for businesses.

So there are a set of ideas that we know would make a difference right now. And there's one reason that they're not being pursued, and that includes, by the way, immigration reform. José has spoken movingly about his own experiences as an immigrant, and he's exhibit A of what happens when we give immigrants an opportunity to take root in this country and create businesses and jobs. There's one reason why this isn't moving. The reason it's not moving is because we've got a Congress that has been resistant to commonsense ideas that historically have been bipartisan.

And so this election that's coming up is about whether or not we are prepared to do the work—to vote, to turn out—to create the kind of Congress that can actually partner with me. And if I've got some Republicans who are willing to partner, I'm game. If not, let's get some Democrats in there. But we have an opportunity right now to really build on the momentum that we've already created and consolidate our position as the country that is best situated to thrive in the 21st century.

But that means us making good decisions now in order for us to fully realize that possibility, that potential, not just for ourselves, but for the next generation. We've got to make sure we've got a Congress that understands that this is not just about politics, this is about the kind of America we're leaving to our kids and our grandkids.

And that's where you come in. That's why you're so helpful. And I look around the room, and I see people who have devoted enormous time and enormous energy to this effort, and I could not be more grateful to you. But you can't stop now. This is crunch time. We've got one month. I'm going to need everybody here to make sure that you're working as hard as you can so that we can deliver a Congress that is befitting the enormous effort and energy and fundamental decency of the American people.

All right? Thank you, guys. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:31 p.m. at the Zaytinya restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to José Ramón Andrés Puerta, chef/owner, ThinkFoodGroup; Michael Jordan, former guard, National Basketball Association's Chicago Bulls; and Muriel Bowser, member, Council of the District of Colombia. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in New York City
October 7, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! It's good to be back in New York City, even though I mess up your traffic. [*Laughter*] I feel bad about that. But I do love New York.

First of all, to Ed and Betsy, I just want to thank you so much for everything you did to make this such a rousing success. And to all the host committee, thank you, guys. Give them a big round of applause. The DNC treasurer, Andy Tobias, works tirelessly day in, day out. Give Andy a big round of applause. And thank you, Nickel Creek, for your outstanding performance. You can find them on iTunes. They are very good. [*Laughter*]

I was here in New York just a couple weeks ago—you noticed the traffic was even worse then—during the United Nations General Assembly annual gathering of world leaders. And it's appropriate to talk a little bit on the front end about why this particular General Assembly was so indicative of America's position in the world. There are times where I think in this country we doubt ourselves, and there are times when we're uncertain of all the changes that are taking place all across the globe. And understandably, when you see the headlines every single day and you read about ISIS and Ebola and the Russian incursions into Ukraine, there's a sense possibly that the world is spinning so fast and nobody is able to control it.

And yet if you look at what happened at the General Assembly on the terrorist group ISIS

and the need to mobilize an international community to push back against their radical violence, it was the United States that mobilized that coalition both in the Middle East and around the world.

When you look at Ebola, a humanitarian crisis in West Africa, but also a public health crisis that has the possibility of affecting people around the world, it was the United States that is committed to building the infrastructure that allows health workers to get in and start saving lives and making sure that children aren't dying on the streets.

When it came to blunting Russian aggression, it was the United States that mobilized NATO countries and the world community to stand up for the principle that people are independent and have the ability to make their own decisions about their own lives and to seek freedom and prosperity on their own terms.

On climate change, it was the United States that led the way in continuing to mobilize the world community to reduce carbon emissions that are going to affect our kids and our grandchildren.

On every single issue of importance, when there are challenges and there are opportunities around the world, it's not Moscow they call; it's not Beijing. They call us. Because they understand that for all the challenges we sometimes face and the mistakes that we occasionally make, that America continues to be the one indispensable nation and that what we stand for—liberty and democracy and conservation and fairness and justice—those are the things that people around the world aspire to and seek, and they expect the United States to be on their side.

And that's something we can be very proud of. It's a burden. It means we do more than anybody else. We're asked to respond even by folks who are critical of us. People don't always appreciate the work that we do. But in the end, it's a burden that we bear proudly because it's part of what makes us American and it's part of what that lady with the torch in the middle of the water means. It's part of what attracts people from every corner of the globe to this country, understanding that for all our flaws, there's something essential that we stand for that nobody else does, and we're willing to put our money and time and effort and resources and occasionally our lives on behalf of that.

Now, we can only show that leadership if we also have a country that's working on behalf of its own citizens. And when I came into office, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month; we were facing an economic contraction that was actually worse than the Great Depression's in just pure economic terms. And 6 years later—I gave a speech at Northwestern the other day just to kind of give people an impression of what exactly has happened over the last 6 years.

We've lowered the unemployment rate from 10 percent down to 5.9. We've seen now 55 months of uninterrupted private sector job growth, the longest uninterrupted job growth in history. We saved an auto industry that was on the brink of collapse. We stabilized the financial system and have reformed it so that no bank is too big to fail at this point, and we're trying to make sure that we are avoiding the kind of reckless behavior that caused the crisis in the first place.

Millions of people have health care who didn't have it before. And by the way, health care inflation has slowed to the lowest point in 50 years, so much so that Medicare and Medicaid will now save about $188 billion because costs are lowered than anticipated, which is part of the reason why we now have cut the deficit by more than half.

High school graduation rates are up, reading scores are up, math scores are up, college attendance is up. Energy production is the highest that it's ever been. Clean energy production, we've now increased solar power by tenfold, wind power by threefold, doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars.

We have ended "don't ask, don't tell." We stopped defending DOMA. All across the country now, couples who love each other are able to join in that most meaningful of unions.

There's no economic measure, including the stock market, including corporate balance sheets, where we're not better off now than we were when I came into office.

But in the same way that people are anxious about what's happening around the world, people are still anxious about what's happening here at home. And for good reason, because despite the growth, despite the increases in productivity, despite the recovery of the housing market, despite the drop in unemployment, the one trend that has been going on for 20, 30 years now hasn't yet been solved, and that is, is that wages and incomes are stagnant and the prosperity that we see all around us is not broadly shared across the population. The average family in State after State, city after city, still feels as if it's tougher to get ahead now than it ever was. And most importantly, they worry about what the future holds for their kids and their grandkids.

And so everything I've done since I've been in office was not just to get back to where we were, but also to tackle this issue: How do we make sure the prosperity is broadly shared? How do we make sure that if you work hard in this country, no matter what you look like, where you come from, what faith you hold, who you love, that if you work hard in this country, you can get ahead, you can make it.

That's what we've been fighting for. And we have achieved so much, but we still have so much to do, because on that issue the Democrats stand for one thing, one vision of the economy, and the Republicans stand for another.

We believe in raising the minimum wage. We think that if you work full time in this country, you shouldn't live in poverty. Republicans disagree. We believe in fair pay laws that make sure that women get paid the same as men for doing the same work. They disagree.

We believe in comprehensive immigration reform, because we know that we are a nation of immigrants and that if we are welcoming talent from around the world and rationalizing the system, we can secure our borders and make sure that America remains a beacon for people all around the world. And it will be good for our economy and will reduce our deficit. And because our workforce will be younger, we will grow faster. Republicans, so far at least in the House of Representatives, they disagree.

Audience member. Boo!

The President. I always say, don't boo, vote.

We believe in rebuilding our infrastructure all across the country, our roads, our bridges, our water mains, our sewer lines. It's not sexy, but we've got $2 trillion worth of deferred maintenance. If we put people back to work right now, it's not just going to benefit guys in hard hats and gals in hard hats, it's going to benefit all of us, because it will make the economy more productive, it will create jobs not just in construction, but in engineering and in advertising and manufacturing. Huge opportunities there, but unfortunately, so far at least, we can't get Republicans to cooperate.

We believe in investing in early childhood education. We know every dollar we put into early childhood education we get $7 back in kids who are doing better and not dropping out at the same rates and less likely to be involved in the criminal just system, more likely to go to college and more likely to succeed and be successful citizens. The other side doesn't think that's a commitment we should make.

We believe in things like family leave, because we think that if a parent sees a sick child, they should be able to get time off and be able to afford to take a day off for a sick child or a sick parent.

On each and every one of these issues, there's a contrast. And what it really boils down to is, do you think our economy does best, do you think our society does best, do you think our politics do best when everybody is in the game, when everybody is getting a fair shot, when prosperity is broadly shared and economic growth is based on the idea of a growing, thriving middle class and ladders for opportunity for people who want to get into that middle class? And the other side thinks, no, no, what we should just be doing is allowing prosperity to all stay at the top and maybe trickle down, eliminate regulations on banks or credit card companies or polluters, and that that somehow is going to unleash the power of the American economy.

And history is on our side. Facts are on our side. And the good news is, the American people are on our side. On issue after issue, when you actually ask folks, they agree with us by wide margins.

But here's the catch. Democrats have a congenital disease: We do not vote in midterm elections. We don't vote at the same rates in midterm elections as we do at Presidential elections. And when you combine that with gerrymandering and the shenanigans around voting rights that you see in State after State, what ends up happening is, is that we have more folks who agree with us, but all too often, they end up winning some of these elections.

And we just can't afford that right now. Too much is at stake. I've run my last campaign. Michelle is deeply grateful. [*Laughter*] But the issues I'm fighting for, the issues that I will continue to fight for even after I leave this office, those issues are at stake. And we've got to be willing to fight for them. We've got to feel a sense of urgency about this at a time when, frankly, the press and Washington, all it does is feed cynicism.

Most of you don't know the statistics I just gave you. And the reason you don't know them is because they elicit hope. They're good news. They shouldn't be controversial. And that's not what we hear about. We hear about phony scandals, and we hear about the latest shiny object, and we hear about how Washington will never work.

But you know what, cynicism is a choice. Cynicism didn't send a man on the Moon. Cynicism never cured a disease. Cynicism didn't win women or Blacks the right to vote. Cynicism never built a business or created a job. Cynicism is a choice. And hope is a better choice.

And when I ran in 2008, I talked about hope. And sometimes, people ask me—even in the photo line I took just now, people asked, oh, how do you do it? Everything is so negative. Seems like there's so many problems. How do you do it, Mr. President? And I tell people—and this is true—I've never been more hopeful than I am now.

I look back at what we've been able to accomplish over the last 6 years—why, why wouldn't I feel hopeful? Why wouldn't I feel hopeful about what we can do in the next 2 if we've got a Congress that is willing to work and reflects the decency and the values of the American people?

I am profoundly optimistic about America. I need you to be also. And then I need you to express your optimism not just in voting yourselves, but in getting involved. We've got a month. And the work that we do, the money we raise, the doors that we knock on, the phone calls that we make, can make a difference, because some of these races will be decided by a few hundred votes, a few thousands votes. But the consequences of just us voting an extra 1 percent or 2 percent could make the difference as to whether we're able to preserve a woman's right to make her own health care decisions, could end up making a difference in terms of whether poor kids around the county have a decent shot at life, could end up making a difference in terms of whether we're able to fund the science and the research that is so important for our future. Just 1 or 2 percent.

So, bottom line is this: If you feel, as I do, fundamentally hopeful about the American people and fundamentally hopeful about what we can do together, then this next month, I need you to have the same kind of urgency that you have during a Presidential election. Get involved. And this is a great place to start.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:12 p.m. at the White Street restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Edward Zimmerman, chair of the Tech Group, Lowenstein Sandler LLP, and his wife Betsy. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Greenwich, Connecticut

October 7, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Thank you so much. Well, first of all, I just want to thank Ellen, Rich, and Scott and Brooke. These guys have been supporters since way back, before a lot of people could pronounce my name. [*Laughter*] And they have been incredible friends and supporters ever since. Whether we're up or whether we're down, they've always been there for us. And it just really means so much to be back in their beautiful home. I want to thank them for their hospitality, even though Spree, their dog, got hair all over my pants. [*Laughter*] But fortunately, these days I travel with one of those rollers. [*Laughter*] Somebody had a roller somewhere. He is an adorable dog.

A couple of people that I want to acknowledge. Your own Senators, who do a great job each and every day—Dick Blumenthal is here. Where's Dick? There he is. And Chris Murphy. Give Chris a big round of applause. Chris is back here. And one of the finest young Senators that we have who has this thankless job—I don't know whether Dick and Chris volunteered him—but we're happy that he's doing it, because it's an enormous workload, but he handles it with grace and good humor and is doing an outstanding job: Michael Bennet from Colorado.

So the nice thing is, this is a small group, and it gives me a chance to have a conversation rather than to give a long speech. Let me just say a few things at the top, and then we'll open it up for questions and comments.

Point number one, the world is going through tumultuous times. And we see it in the headlines every day: ISIL, Ebola, Ukraine. It seems like every day there's a new challenge. The thing I want to emphasize, and we saw this at the United Nations General Assembly just a couple of weeks ago, is that on every issue it's American leadership that's mobilizing the international community to tackle it.

In Ukraine, we've been able to at least blunt Russian aggression because the United States helped to mobilize the world community and Europe to impose tough sanctions and to impose a cost on Russia for its actions, and to support Ukraine in the basic notion that they should be able to make their own decisions about their country.

With respect to Ebola, it is because our galvanizing action, including sending 3,000 of our finest men and women in uniform to essentially build up an infrastructure in three countries, that are allowing us to now mobilize the international community to start putting resources in there and to deal with one of the great humanitarian tragedies that we've seen in a long time, but also a threat to our own safety and security.

With respect to ISIL, it's American leadership that has galvanized the international community to take on what is really the logical conclusion of the sort of violent extremism that's been building up in the Middle East for far too long.

And so, on each and every issue, America remains the one indispensable nation. And as I've said at the U.N. General Assembly and in other settings, whether it's a typhoon or an earthquake or political breakdown in a country, they don't call Beijing, and they don't call Moscow. They call us, even our critics. Because they understand that America stands for a set of principles and ideals and values that we're willing to fight for and put resources in. And it's making the world a better place. And I have no doubt, as a consequence, that we will continue to be able to meet whatever challenges arise on the international stage.

The good news is that we're better positioned for leadership than any time in the last several decades. When I came into office—and a lot of you are familiar with it. Rich and I were talking about the nature of the real estate market. When I came into office, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. The real estate market had entirely collapsed, capital markets were frozen, and we were teetering on the brink of a cataclysmic financial crisis.

Today, 6 years later, the stock market is at an alltime high, corporate balance sheets never been stronger. Unemployment has gone from 10 percent down to 5.9 percent. We've seen a healing of the housing market, complete with a recovery of the auto market. Manufacturing is as strong as it's been since the 1990s. We've created more jobs in the United States than Japan, Europe, and every industrialized nation combined during those 6 years. Combined. Our deficit has been cut by more than half. Millions of people have health care who didn't have it before. Health care inflation is the lowest it's been in 50 years, and as a consequence, we're saving about $188 billion over the next 10 years in health care costs to the Federal Government, without cutting benefits and actually improving quality.

Our energy production has never been more robust. We are the world's largest producers of oil, largest producers of natural gas. We now produce more oil than we import for the first time in 20 years. We've doubled clean energy production, tripled wind energy production. Solar energy production has increased tenfold. We've doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars, and as a consequence, we've brought carbon emissions down more than any other advanced nation on Earth.

On education, reading scores up, math scores up. High school graduation up. College attendance at an alltime high. There is no measure—just about—of economic well-being in which we are not better off than when I came into office. And yet people are anxious, and the question is why. And the reason is, is because trends that preceded me coming into office—in fact, dating back for 20 years—have created an economy in which productivity gains and growth and a robust stock market have not necessarily translated into increased incomes and wages for ordinary people.

And so folks still feel as if no matter how hard they work, they don't seem to be getting ahead. And a combination of technology and globalization, but also policy has made it for a winner-take-all economy where folks in Greenwich and most of the folks in this room are doing very well, but the average person still feels like if they're hanging on, they're not sure whether their kids are going to be able to achieve the same kinds of advancement that they were able to achieve in their lives.

Now, the good news is, there are solutions to that. If we increase the minimum wage, 28 million people rise out of poverty. In those States that have increased the minimum wage over the last couple of years, since I called for an increase, have created more jobs and grown faster than those who didn't. Making sure we've got fair-pay laws so that women are paid the same as men for doing the same work. It's not just a women's issue, that's a family issue.

We know that if we invest in infrastructure—we've got $2 trillion worth of deferred maintenance—we rebuild our roads, our bridges, our airports, our energy grid, not only do we make the economy more efficient, we put people back to work right now, and there is a multiplier effect that could drive the growth rate up higher and reduce unemployment even faster. If we invest in early childhood education, we know that every dollar we spend there, we get $7 back in improved performance, reduced dropout rates.

We know what to do, and none of these agenda items are radical. They used to garner the support of both parties, considered relatively uncontroversial. There's a reason why we can't get those things done right now, although we're doing everything we can administratively to advance the agenda. The reason is, is because you've got a Republican Party, particularly in the House of Representatives, that's been become captive to a very narrow, ideological set of beliefs that think government has no role to play in providing opportunity and that believe that if as long as folks at the very top are doing well and we eliminate regulations on polluters and the financial system, somehow, prosperity will trickle down.

And we've got a different vision for the economy that says when middle class families are doing well, when there are ladders of opportunity and everybody who works hard can get ahead in this country, that's when everybody does well. Business does better, folks at the top do better, middle, down at the

bottom—everybody does better. That's how we grow. That's been our history.

And so the question then becomes whether we can get a Congress that is true to the vision that has been shown to work and has given so many of us opportunities that we might not otherwise have, or whether we succumb to the cynicism and the naysaying of folks in Washington who have a different vision.

And in order for us to do that, we've got to, at minimum, make sure that we continue to have a Senate that believes in those things that will open up opportunity to everybody. You have the wisdom here in Connecticut to have really good Senators, but we need a few more. [*Laughter*] And it's for that reason that Michael Bennet is working so hard, and it's for that reason that I'm here tonight. It's the single most important thing we can do to assure that the 21st century is the American century just like the 20th. But we're going to need your help. And so I'm very grateful for you being here.

All right, we'll open it up for questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:21 p.m. at the residence of Richard P. and Ellen Schapps Richman. In his remarks, he referred to Scott and Brooke Richman, children of Mr. and Mrs. Richman; and Sen. Michael F. Bennet, in his capacity as chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks During a Teleconference Call With State and Local Officials on United States Preparedness and Containment Efforts in Response to the West African Ebola Epidemic

October 8, 2014

Hey, everybody. Thanks for joining the call. Obviously, in your States and communities, you guys are on the frontlines of public health every single day, working to keep the American people healthy and safe. And I thank you for that.

Right now a lot of people's attention is focused on our efforts to prevent an Ebola outbreak in the United States. And I want everybody to know that from day one, this administration has made fighting Ebola a national security priority. We don't think this is just a humanitarian issue or a public health issue, this is a national security priority. And we are working aggressively to stop the epidemic in West Africa, to stop any cases in their tracks here at home.

On Monday, I met with my team to review our efforts. They're here today to update you on what we're doing, to answer your questions, make sure all of you have the information that you need to keep the people in your communities healthy and safe.

And the American people are reasonably concerned. Ebola is a terrible disease, and the fact that in an interconnected world infectious disease can be transported across borders is one of the reasons we have to take it seriously. At the same time—as I think all of us have tried to emphasize—it's important that, as public officials, we know and reinforce the facts. Because we've got a world-class medical system, because we've put in place tough safety measures, because of the work that many of you have done in conjunction with organizations like the CDC and dealing with infectious disease generally, and because of the nature of Ebola and the fact that it's not something involving airborne transmission, the chance of an Ebola outbreak in the United States remains extremely low.

Procedures are in place to evaluate anybody who might be showing symptoms. In recent months, thousands of travelers arrived here from West Africa, and so far, only one case of Ebola has been diagnosed in the United States, and that's the patient in Dallas who we know,

sadly, passed away, and our thoughts today are with his family.

But as we saw in Dallas, we don't have a lot of margin for error. If we don't follow protocols and procedures that are put in place, then we're putting folks in our communities at risk. So we have to follow the procedures and protocols that have been established based on the science.

I want to thank Mayor Rawlings and County Judge Clay Jenkins in Dallas for their cooperation with our team and their leadership on the ground. We're going to make sure that lessons learned in Dallas and clear procedures and protocols for health and safety officials are conveyed to all of you. Secretary Burwell and Dr. Frieden will talk to you about how we're working with hospitals across the country so that local partners are truly prepared should someone who has a history of travel to the affected countries in West Africa start showing symptoms.

At the Federal level, we are always reviewing and evaluating measures that we currently have in place. Today we announced additional screening measures that will be phased in over the coming days and weeks at select airports around the country. And these measures are really just belt-and-suspenders: It's an added layer of protection on top of the procedures already in place at several airports.

The new measures will include additional entry screening and questions for travelers arriving from the countries affected by Ebola. It will give us the ability to isolate, evaluate, and monitor travelers as needed. And we'll be able to collect any contact information that's necessary. So you'll hear all of this from my team shortly.

But let me close by reminding everybody that America has got the best doctors in the world. We know how to deal with infectious disease. I'm confident that, so long as we work together and we're operating with an appropriate sense of urgency, that we will prevent an outbreak from happening here. And in fact, some of the work that we're doing together and the lessons learned from this experience will further strengthen our public health systems going into the future. Because there are going to be, unfortunately, other occasions where we know that there are infectious diseases out there, and in some cases, the transmission may be swifter, and we're going to have to be that much more ready.

So for the Governors and the mayors and the county officials on the line, I've instructed my teams to do whatever Federal assistance they can to make sure you're ready to respond should someone be diagnosed with Ebola in your State. We're going to have to be partners in this fight. Anybody who has any questions, information, or suggestions, that's why my team organized this call. They want to make sure that they're getting feedback from you in terms of what you think will be most helpful.

I want to thank you guys, not just for joining us on the call today, but, more importantly, for the critical work you do every day to keep us healthy and safe.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:24 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas E. Duncan, who died of Ebola in Dallas, TX, on October 8; and Clay L. Jenkins, judge, Dallas County, TX.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Department of Defense Leadership at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia
October 8, 2014

Good afternoon, everybody. I want to thank Secretary Hagel, Deputy Secretary Work, Chairman Dempsey, Vice Chairman Winnefeld, and all the outstanding leaders who are here today. This is a periodic check-in that I have with not only our service commanders, but also our COCOMs. And I thought, although usually, we do this over the White House, now was a good time for me to come over to the Pentagon and have an opportunity

to hear from our top military about the work that they're doing.

And I've said this before, and I want to repeat: We put enormous burdens and enormous strains on our men and women of the Armed Forces, and each and every time, the members of our Armed Services, our troops, perform in exemplary fashion. I think at a time when there's so much turbulence in the world, never during my Presidency has it become more apparent how good our military is, but also how they can tackle a wide range of problems and not just a narrow set of problems. It's not just the finest military in the history of the world, it's also just one of the best organizations we've ever seen at doing a whole bunch of different stuff.

And so I expressed my gratitude to the leadership, but also asked them to express to those under their command the thanks of the American people.

We had an opportunity to talk about ISIL and the campaign there. After this meeting, we'll have a National Security Council meeting in which General Lloyd Austin, who's leading Central Command, will further brief us on the progress that's been made by the coalition there.

Our strikes continue alongside our partners'. It remains a difficult mission. As I've indicated from the start, this is not something that is going to be solved overnight. The good news is, is that there is a broad-based consensus not just in the region, but among nations of the world that ISIL is a threat to world peace, security, and order, that their barbaric behavior has to be dealt with. And we're confident that we will be able to continue to make progress in partnership with the Iraqi Government, because ultimately, it's going to be important for them to be able to, with our help, secure their own country and to find the kind of political accommodations that are necessary for long-term prosperity in the region.

We had a chance to talk about the fight against Ebola, and I got a briefing from General Rodriguez. Our military is essentially building an infrastructure that does not exist in order to facilitate the transport of personnel and equipment and supplies to deal with this deadly epidemic and disease. And we are doing it in a way that ensures our men and women in uniform are safe. That has been my top priority, and I've instructed folks, we're not going to compromise the health and safety of our Armed Services.

But what's true is, we have unique capabilities that nobody else has. And as a consequence of us getting in early and building that platform, we're now able to leverage resources from other countries and move with speed and effectiveness to curb that epidemic.

We had a discussion about global security generally, including the work that, with General Breedlove, we're doing at NATO to mobilize Europe around the increased threats posed by Russian aggression in Ukraine and against some of its neighbors. We had a very successful meeting in Wales that showed the commitment from all 28 NATO countries to redouble the reassurance they can provide to frontline states to invest further in the joint capabilities that are necessary. And I very much appreciate the leadership that General Breedlove has shown on that front.

And I got a chance to get a briefing from Admiral Locklear of the Pacific Command about the ongoing both challenges and opportunities in the Pacific. It's been noted that our alliances in that area have never been stronger. We are very much welcomed as a Pacific power in the region. And our ability to continue to maintain a presence that ensures freedom of navigation, that international law is observed, is going to be critically important. And we need to do that in a way that also reflects our interest in cooperation and effective communication with China, which obviously is a major player in the region.

But the anchor of our presence there, our treaties and alliances with key countries like South Korea and Japan, obviously remain critically important. And thanks to the work of some of the gentlemen sitting around this table and their staffs, those alliances have never been in better shape.

Finally, we had a chance to talk briefly about defense budget and reforms. We have done

some enormous work, and I want to thank everybody sitting around this table to continue to make our forces leaner, meaner, more effective, more tailored to the particular challenges that we're going to face in the 21st century.

But we also have to make sure that Congress is working with us to avoid, for example, some of the draconian cuts that are called for in sequestration and to make sure that, if we're asking this much of our Armed Forces, that they've got the equipment and the technology that's necessary for them to be able to succeed at their mission and that we're supporting their families at a time when, even after ending one war and winding down another, they continue to have enormous demands placed on them each and every day.

So I want to thank everybody around this table. A special thank you to General Austin for the enormous amount of work that's been done by CENTCOM in what is a very challenging situation. We very much appreciate him. I want to thank General Rodriguez for the great work in standing up our operations in West Africa.

And finally, I want to say publicly a hearty thank you to Jim Amos, who somewhere between 8 to 10 days from now—[*laughter*]—will be retiring from his command. He is the 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, the first aviator to command our Marine Corps. I know that he could not be prouder of the men and women under his command. They continue to make us proud. They certainly make him proud. We want to thank him and Mrs. Amos and the entire family for the great service that they've rendered to our country.

So thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David M. Rodriguez, USA, commander, U.S. Africa Command; Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, USAF, Supreme Allied Commander Europe; and Bonnie Amos, wife of Gen. James F. Amos, USMC, Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Town Hall Meeting at Cross Campus in Santa Monica, California
October 9, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Well, it's good to see all of you. And this is really interesting stuff. I want to spend more time tooling around on there and maybe buy an appliance. [*Laughter*] But we've got limited time. I want to be able to have a conversation with all of you.

This environment, I think, is reflective of what's best in America, because it shows the kind of energy and entrepreneurship, the dynamism, the creativity and innovation that's always been the hallmark of the American economy.

There are a couple of people here who I want to acknowledge because they are encouraging this kind of startup culture here in Los Angeles, which has really gotten going. We've got Mayor Eric Garcetti in the house. Where'd he go? There is he. We've got the mayor of Santa Monica, which sounds like a really good job—Pam O'Connor is here. And I want to thank all the folks at Cross Campus who helped bring this together. So, Cross Campus folks, stand up. Where are you?

So both Pam and Eric and a lot of folks, I think, are working hard to make L.A. a model for innovation here in California, but also a model for what we need to see all across the country.

And just this week, I want to acknowledge, L.A. schools announced a plan to offer computer science classes to every K-through-12 student in the district, which is going to make a huge difference. It's the kind of drive and creativity, but also the investment of hard dollars in our future that is going to be so important and part of what brings me here today.

I'm not going to give a long speech, because I want to basically have a conversation with all of you. But I do want you to consider a few things.

Last month, our businesses added 236,000 new jobs. Over the past 55 months, we've added about 10.3 million new jobs across America. And what we've seen is the longest uninterrupted stretch of private sector job growth in our history. And that's why, for the first time in more than 6 years, the unemployment rate has now dropped below 6 percent. And today, we're on pace for the strongest job growth since the 1990s. Interesting statistic: All told, over these last 6 years, the United States has put more people back to work than Japan, Europe, and every advanced economy combined, which gives us a sense of the kind of momentum that we could be building.

And beneath that, all kinds of good stuff is happening. I mean, we have cut our deficit by more than half. High school graduation rates are higher than ever. College attendance is higher than ever.

On the energy front, we're producing more traditional energy than ever before, but we're also more energy efficient than we've ever been before. We're doubling fuel efficiency standards on cars, and in fact, car fuel efficiency is the highest it's ever been on record.

We've doubled the production of clean energy, increased solar energy by tenfold, wind energy by threefold, all of which is giving a huge advantage to our manufacturers. And instead of seeing outsourcing, we're now starting to see companies actually wanting to move manufacturing back from China here to the United States of America. Our manufacturing is growing faster than at any time since the nineties. And obviously, our auto industry, which was barely hanging on when we first came into office, now is not only producing a lot of cars and hiring more folks than they have in two decades, but the cars are actually good, and you guys are actually buying them and driving them. [*Laughter*]

And perhaps the best thing that's happening is, is that we've got a rising generation of talented, striving, innovative young people. And I know that there's a few of us here who are only young at heart, but a lot of you are part of the millennial generation that's going to change how we do things.

Today, more of our young people are earning a college degree than ever before. More and more children of low-income parents are enrolling in college and earning their shot at the American Dream. Along with higher education levels, millennials have a lower gender pay gap than other generations, and we're working to close that gap even further.

And what we're seeing here is the way that technology is changing not just how you do business, not just how you buy products, but also how you interact, how you organize politically, how you get involved in the community, and how you solve problems. And all of that can support millions of new jobs.

So, in some ways, entrepreneurship is in the DNA of this generation. And a lot of that is taking place all across the country. Obviously, California is an epicenter of it, and Silicon Valley is the crown jewel of our innovation economy, but it's happening in Kansas City. It's happening in places in Colorado. It's happening in towns in Ohio. And everywhere you go, you see people turning great ideas into great companies.

Today my administration is putting out a report on what the economy is going to look like for millennials. A lot of you entered into the workforce during the worst financial crisis and then the worst recession since the Great Depression. And a lot of cynics have said, well, that makes many of you part of a lost generation. But I don't buy that, because when I travel around the country, I see the kind of energy and hope and determination that so many of you are displaying here.

We're coming out of this recession with the best educated, the most diverse, the most digitally fluent generation of adults in American history. And we also have, as I said before, a shift where more women are now getting college degrees, getting higher degrees, and that's part of what's closing not only the pay gap, but also the entrepreneurship gap, all across the country.

I think we can do better, though, than we're doing even right now. And that's why we've expanded grants and tax credits and loans to help more families get to college. We've acted to give nearly 5 million Americans the chance to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their income, which means that they can afford to go out and take a risk. The Affordable Care Act means that if you're a young entrepreneur, you don't have to be locked into a job worrying that otherwise you won't have health insurance because now you're able to get an affordable plan through the marketplace exchanges that have been set up. And all of this creates or at least provides a platform for some of the stuff that you guys are already doing.

And I want to make this other point. When I took office, the deficit was nearly 10 percent; today, it's under 3. That's below the average deficit over the past 40 years. And the reason this is important is, it means we can shore up America's long-term finances without falling back into either mindless cuts on things like R&D and education or suddenly seeing the deficit explode. We can manage the country's finances while still investing in you.

But—and this is the last point I'm going to make, and then we'll open up for questions—the one area where we have not made progress is, even though the economy is growing, productivity is growing, wages and incomes have been flat. And so the gains in the economy, not just over the last 6 years, but really over the last 20, have more and more been going to the top of the economic pyramid, and the average middle class person, person who's working to get into the middle class, they have not seen any meaningful increase in their wages and incomes, their take-home pay.

Part of that has to do with globalization and technology. It makes the world more competitive, and it gives workers less leverage. But part of it is also, we haven't been adjusting our policies to make sure that our economy and economic growth is broadly based.

There are things we could do right now: increasing the minimum wage, which hasn't increased in 7 years; making sure that fair pay laws are strong enough so that women are no longer making 77 cents for every dollar that a man is making; making sure that we're investing in infrastructure, not just roads and bridges, but a smart grid to make sure that we're—our entire system is using energy more efficiently; making sure that we are in the next generation of broadband and wireless so that there's penetration not just in a place like Los Angeles, but in small rural communities that right now still feel excluded from this revolution that's taking place.

Fixing up our airports: If we changed our air traffic control system, it's estimated that the airlines could save 30 percent on their fuel costs, just because they wouldn't be circling. And by the way, they'd be cutting time on delays, which means that customers get better service, ticket prices would be lower, and you wouldn't be stuck paying exorbitant amounts of money for food at the kiosk that you really don't need anyway. [*Laughter*]

So those are just examples of things that we know would help grow the economy faster, increase wages and incomes, give more opportunity to entrepreneurs like so many of you. The only reason we're not doing it right now is because we've got a Congress that has been spending a little bit too much time worrying about the next election and not enough time worrying about the next generation.

But the good news is, is that despite some of the gridlock in Washington, we're making progress. And when I come to places like this, it inspires me and reminds me of why I am chronically optimistic about the future of America. [*Applause*] Thanks very much.

All right, let's—[*applause*].

All right. So this is really informal. And what I'm going to do is, I'm just going to call on anybody who's got their hand up. But I am going to go boy, girl, boy, girl. [*Laughter*] If you can stand up, introduce yourself before you ask the question. We've got folks with mikes in the back. Wait for the microphone so we can hear you. And if you keep your question relatively short, then I will—I can't guarantee it, but I'll try to keep my answers relatively short. So, all right?

Okay, we've got this gentleman with—in the white shirt right there. That's it, you. Yes. Introduce yourself.

Health Care Reform/Health Care Costs/Genetic Research/Medical Innovation

Q. My name is Ramin Bastani, my company is Healthvana. It's an honor to be here. So the reforms that you did in health care have spurred innovation in companies like mine, where we can now help health care providers engage their patients at a clip of ten times better than the Mayo Clinic is doing, with the tools we're using. So my question for you is, what kind of health and technology would you like for you and your family to help monitor and make your health better?

The President. Well, this is an area where there is going to be a revolution. It's coming; sounds like you're at the forefront of it. You can sit down; you don't have to—[*laughter*]—it doesn't have to be too formal. [*Laughter*]

The—we have excellent health care in this country, but hugely inefficient health care in this country. So, if you can access the Mayo Clinic or Cleveland Clinic or some of the best hospitals in the world, you're doing great. If you've got good insurance, great.

But if you don't, all too often, we've got a system that is clunky, bureaucratic, spends too much money. We spend about 6 percent more than other advanced countries, and our outcomes are no better. And that's what spurred my insistence that we were going to have to reform the system. Now, it's a massive part of our economy; it's one-sixth of our economy. You're talking trillions of dollars.

And so it was going to be bumpy to get reform through. But what we've now seen is, not only so far do we have 10 million people who have health insurance that didn't have it before, but what's also happened is, because of the delivery system reforms that we're driving, we're—we've seen health cost inflation slow to the lowest rate in 50 years.

Now, that may not seem a big deal to you, but if you get health insurance from your employer, on average, you're paying about $1,600 less per family than you would have been paying if the pace of health care inflation had continued, which is like a $1,600 tax cut. Nobody notices it, but that's what's happened.

At the Federal budget level, we're saving about $188 billion over the next 10 years in reduced costs for things like Medicare. So it helps us balance the books, it helps families reducing costs, it helps businesses.

But we've still got huge amounts of waste, and you're identifying part of the reason that there's so much waste in the system. We've got a—we don't really have a health care system, we have a "sick care" system. So our system is built around treating illnesses; rarely is our system incentivizing people to stay healthy in the first place.

And part of what technology is going to be able to do is to give each of us information that allows us to stay healthier. Now, some of it is as simple as a Fitbit and encouraging people to walk a certain number of steps. But part of what we're now seeing is, not only ways to keep track of your health and how much exercise you're getting and what you're eating; what's really going to be interesting over the next decade, two decades, is precision medicine, or personalized medicine.

Because of the work that's been done on the human genome and the breakdown of—and the ability to sequence your genetic makeup, and—the costs are going down actually faster than Moore's Law. It's—they're plummeting, so that pretty soon, you're looking at, for a hundred bucks or less, you can get your entire human genome sequenced. And what that means, then, is, at minimum, you're going to know there's certain diseases that you may be more prone to get. You're going to know that you're more predisposed to Alzheimer's for example. And if you think about the power of the web, then giving you that information and then saying, here's what we know about this particular disease and how you can reduce your risks, now suddenly, each person is in a position to really do something about it and be proactive.

Now, we're going to have to change how we regulate some of this stuff. We don't want bad information going out. We don't—we want to make sure that there's not a lot of hucksterism

in this whole process. We are still going to need doctors and hospitals to make sure, when you're thinking about actual interventions, like taking a certain drug, that that's regulated.

But the potential of this to really change how people think about their own health care is tremendous. And this is a change that we want to encourage. In fact, I've been putting together sort of a working group, not just inside the White House, but with all our various agencies, to start thinking about how do we create a platform for us to really take advantage of this, and how do we make sure that we're giving entrepreneurs the ability, if we build an effective platform, to essentially develop apps that work off this new information. So—all right.

Yes, right here. Sorry, there's a light in my eye. But——

Women in the Sciences/Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Education

Q. Hi.

The President. Hi.

Q. I'm Kara Nortman, and my company is P.S. XO. And just quick background on my question: I am the CEO of a tech startup and also the mother of three daughters.

The President. There you go. Can't beat daughters.

Q. Yes. Yes, daughters are wonderful.

The President. They are outstanding. [*Laughter*] Yes, how old are your daughters?

Q. Six, four, and one.

The President. Oh, you're still in the busy stage.

Q. Yes, we're in the—yes, we're in the joyful stage.

The President. I'm in the stage where they still love me, but I'm boring. [*Laughter*]

Q. I long for and lament getting to that stage. [*Laughter*] My question is—an issue that I'm really passionate about is women in technology. And so, as we see the outpaced growth of tech jobs and the impact those jobs have on the economy, what can we really do to accelerate moving women into more technology-related jobs and fields? And I struggle to bring women into those roles in my companies, and I try very hard.

The President. Great question. This is something we're spending a lot of time thinking about: How do we encourage more women, but also minorities into STEM fields: science, technology, engineering, math? On average, wages are about 33-percent higher than non-STEM occupations, and yet women are not at all represented the way they should be in these fields. Neither are African Americans or Latinos.

A lot of it starts early. And how do we teach math, and how do we teach science, and how are we encouraging girls to excel in these fields? And some of it is just socialization that has lingered for a long, long time. So we've got a whole bunch of different agencies thinking about this. We have an entire effort, through the Department of Education, giving grants and incentives to school districts to encourage traditionally underrepresented groups to get into STEM.

We're doing a lot of research and then trying to apply that research to think about how the best way to teach STEM is to girls, because their learning patterns may be different. The classic tech nerd is this isolated person, right, sitting on a—I mean, that's the stereotype. Well, it may turn out that girls, up to a certain age, want a more social environment, in which case, if you then have group learning and projects as a way of teaching math, science, then, suddenly, you may get more interest.

So that's sort of at the K-through-12 level, thinking about how are we teaching it more effectively; how are we encouraging young people to get into it; how are we publicizing women who are already in science, engineering, math, and publicizing that.

Just an interesting example: Apparently, when you see a engineer or a tech person on a TV show or movies, something like 90 percent of them are male. Right? So, if you never see you in that position, it's hard to imagine, well, that's something I should be doing. And here's how much just a change like that can make a difference. Apparently, when CSI starting coming out, there were a number of women

who were in forensics, and the number of women who applied to go—to get into forensics and started studying that field skyrocketed, just from CSI. So we know that just these cultural cues that we send out can make an enormous difference.

And then, the last part of this is working with schools of engineering. A lot of talented—and this is a problem that is especially acute for women and minorities, but it's actually true generally—too many of folks who have talent in math or science, when they get to college suddenly find themselves steered into finance because it looks as if that's the path of least resistance and more lucrative. And there's nothing wrong with folks obviously going into finance, but if our best talent for numbers are all ending up on Wall Street instead of ending up as engineers, then over time, our economy is going to be out of balance. And that's something that we're going to spend a lot of time working on. And we've actually got a public-private initiative to get a hundred thousand more engineers. A lot of that then is trying to tap new talent, people who probably would make great engineers, but right are ending up being diverted someplace else.

Great question. All right, gentleman right here with the cool sweater. [*Laughter*] Or jacket.

Q. I get a lot of compliments on this jacket. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, it's cool.

Transportation/Infrastructure

Q. Thanks. So I run a company called RideAmigos.

The President. What's your name?

Q. My name is Jeffrey Chernick. I'm the CEO of RideAmigos. And we have a transportation-mobility platform that we license to cities like Denver and San Diego and the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce and different cities across the United States, and it helps people not drive alone. So it helps people find ways to commute without getting in the car alone, like transit, carpooling, biking, walking, skateboarding, all of the above. And we do so with interesting technology in GIS and just tracking and helping people find information that they don't normally have access to.

The President. Okay.

Q. So my question is around, when it comes to the Government stance on spending money on new transportation infrastructure, maintaining infrastructure, and then actually investing in having people use the infrastructure we already have, just not drive alone, most of the programs that our company have, they're all Government—federally funded. So what is your stance on the, I guess, the choices that we have as far as spending goes and what the priorities are?

The President. Well, I think it's all of the above, right? America is a car nation, historically. All right? We built the Interstate Highway System in the fifties, and ever since, America has been synonymous with the open road and driving. Right? It's sort of in our DNA. And that's not going to change overnight.

You are starting to see different patterns with millennials, though, partly because they're more urbanized, where the notion of, "I just want to get to where I want to go, and I don't feel like I have to have my own car to do it, and there are a number of options that I may want to exercise depending on the day," is giving rise to a bunch of different opportunities.

So, when you think about infrastructure, we do have roads that are busted up and broken. Out here in California, it doesn't look as bad because you don't get snow and salt. But if you go—colder climate areas, our roads in a lot of places are in bad shape. They need to be repaired. We should repair them partly because when you put folks back to work, it's not just the hard hats that benefit from road construction, it's also cement makers and manufacturers and engineers and so forth. You get a big ripple effect from infrastructure investment.

And by the way, when I talk infrastructure, it's also hidden infrastructure that we don't see: water mains, sewer systems, huge inefficiencies there. And I already mentioned the smart grid, where the amount of leakage that we have on energy is a real problem. I mean, we could make—we could reduce carbon

emissions, reduce pollution, reduce power consumption without changing our lifestyles just with a better, more resilient power grid.

But what we also have to do is make sure that we're investing in mass transit. And so every budget that I've put forward has tried to increase the amount of mass transit spending in our budget, rather than simply invest in the same existing mix that we've had.

We are constantly working with municipalities like Los Angeles to figure out, all right, you guys are thinking about bike lanes, you're thinking about this, you're thinking about that. Let's put that in the mix. And so what we want is an all-of-the-above strategy that can take advantage of different preferences that this next generation may have in terms of how to move.

And by the way, we can afford all this without blowing up our deficits in some fashion. My budget basically said that if we close some corporate tax loopholes as part of an overall tax reform package to make the system more efficient, not only can we lower corporate tax rates, make capital allocations more efficient, but we can actually take some of that money that we save and put that into infrastructure spending.

So, bottom line is—as you might not be surprised to hear—Congress has not done that yet. Hope springs eternal though. And—because traditionally this wasn't a partisan issue. It didn't use to be that building stuff was a Democratic issue.

My—the first Republican President was a guy named Lincoln, helped to get railroads across this continent. And Eisenhower, as I said, built the Interstate Highway System. So, traditionally, this is something that we should be able to get together and do.

There are always politics in transportation funding and infrastructure funding, mainly because different States all want a little bit of their share. And some of the traditional players like the folks that pour concrete, they tend to have a little additional influence with Congress on that stuff.

But there's so much that we can do. And the kind of service that you're providing, when you combine it with some of the stuff that's happening in the share economy, means that we need to think 10, 15, 20 years ahead and anticipate how people are going to be living and how they want to travel, as opposed to just looking backwards and expecting that the same old patterns are going to be there for the next 20 years.

Yes. Got a mike? You can always use mine, but here, you'll get your own. [*Laughter*]

Internet Neutrality/Intellectual Property/Patent Reform

Q. Hi, I'm Julianna Raye, and I have a company called Pop Go Zen. I train people in mindfulness meditation. And I also——

The President. I need that.

Q. Huh? Yes.

The President. Yes.

Q. It's fantastic. It's preventative.

The President. Absolutely.

Q. Speaking about preventative health care. And I also have been a professional musician for about 20 years. So I want to speak to the issues that the little guy is facing in terms of their innovation being protected and in terms of boot-strapping their entrepreneurial endeavor. I want to speak to net neutrality and to intellectual property rights protection.

The President. Yes, well, the—this is obviously an issue that we've been working on for a long time. It was something that I spoke about back in '08. And we're continually trying to fine-tune it and stay focused on.

On net neutrality, I made a commitment very early on that I am unequivocally committed to net neutrality. I think that it is what has—[*applause*]—I think it's what has unleashed the power of the Internet, and we don't want to lose that or clog up the pipes.

And so there are a lot of aspects to net neutrality. I know one of the things that people are most concerned about is paid prioritization, the notion that somehow, some folks can pay a little more money and get better service, more exclusive access to customers through the Internet. That's something I'm opposed. I'm—I was opposed to it when I ran. I continue to be opposed to it now.

Now, the FCC is an independent agency. They came out with some preliminary rules that I think the Netroots and a lot of folks in favor of net neutrality were concerned with. My appointee, Tom Wheeler, knows my position. I can't—now that he's there, I can't just call him up and tell him exactly what to do. But what I've been clear about, what the White House has been clear about is, is that we expect whatever final rules to emerge to make sure that we're not creating two or three or four tiers of Internet. That ends up being a big priority of mine.

When it comes to intellectual property protection, this is a trickier issue because you end up getting the tech community divided, people are on different sides of it. In some cases, the same company will be really concerned about protecting this aspect of their intellectual property, but feel free to want to stream somebody else's intellectual property. And so trying to get the right balance is important.

I think the basic concept is that you want to have sufficient IP, and—whether patents or copyrights—that you are continually encouraging and rewarding innovation and creativity. But you don't want those structures so tight, in terms of protecting that intellectual property, that that ends up being actually an inhibitor to people getting good information, folks coming up with new uses for existing information.

And then, one of the biggest problems that we've been working on is how do we deal with these folks who basically are filing phony patents and are costing some of our best innovators tons of money in court, or if they don't go to court, they end up having to pay them off even though they're making a bogus claim just because it's not worth it for you to incur all the litigation costs.

So we've made some progress on patent reform. We continue to work with Congress to do more. But if we can maintain net neutrality, get the balance right on patents and copyrights, then I'm confident that we're going to continue to—and by the way, and then enforce intellectual property, because a lot of the theft of intellectual property that takes place isn't happening here in the United States, it's offshore.

And that's why we actually have to have an international system to deal with this. That's not always easy. I'll be honest with you that piracy ends up being a huge problem overseas, and that's an area that—where we've stepped up enforcement and tried to get some multinational—multilateral agreements to do something about it. Okay?

All right, right here.

Immigration Reform

Q. Hi, my name is Blair Golson, and I'm a member of the management team here at Cross Campus. I'd like to know how—what's your vision for how the immigration code should be amended to encourage more immigrants with technical skills to be able to work legally in the United States? And given the political climate in Washington, what do you think the prospects are for getting some movement on that before you leave office?

The President. Good. It's a great question. Well, as I think some of you know—Eric Garcetti certainly knows—this is an issue that I've been fighting for for a long time now, dating back to when I was in the U.S. Senate. We are a nation of immigrants. Part of the reason America has always thrived has been because we attract talent from around the world: strivers, folks who are full of new ideas, energy, and are willing to take risks. And that continues to this day.

We know that when it comes to tech, a huge percentage of some of our biggest startups, like Intel and Google, were started by first-generation Americans, immigrants. We know that about 25 percent of our Nobel Prize winners in the sciences are naturalized Americans. And so the idea that we would make it harder for talent to come here—especially when so often that talent is coming to study here, going to school here, wants to stay here, wants to work here, wants to invest here—makes no sense.

The good news is that we were able to pass out of the Senate a comprehensive immigration reform bill that would simplify and make more efficient legal immigration by talented

folks, and at the same time would deal with the millions of undocumented workers who live here—California obviously has a huge number of them—who oftentimes have been here for more than a decade, their kids have grown up here, for all practical purposes are Americans, but don't have the right papers. And would also, by the way, then give us more resources to deal with the border. The House Republicans have refused to call that bill.

So we are in a position now where we're going to have to see what the Republicans are going to do after the election. In the meantime, though, I'm not waiting. So I already signed an Executive order that allowed young people who had been brought here as children—so-called DREAM kids—to stay here without fear of deportation. And what I've committed to is, is that assuming Congress does not act, I will use all the executive authority that I legally have in order to make fixes in some of the system. And that includes potentially making the H–1B system that's often used by tech companies and some of the other elements of our legal immigration system more efficient so we can encourage more folks to stay here.

But whatever I do through the executive branch will not be as effective as we could do through legislation. And it's anybody's guess how Republicans are thinking about this. If they were thinking long term politically, it is suicide for them not to do this. Because the demographics of the country are such where you are going to lose an entire generation of immigrants who are looking around and saying, you know what, that party does not seem to care much about me and my life. And I think the smarter Republicans understand this. Short term, though, they've got a problem, and the Tea Party and others who oftentimes express virulently anti-immigrant sentiment.

And the politics of this got a little tougher during the summer when these unaccompanied children from Central America showed up. It was a small section of our border. We've gotten the numbers of them that were coming here down to a lower level than we saw last year. But that 2 or 3 weeks of publicity, I think, fanned concern about that situation.

I'm confident, though, eventually—and I think it will happen over the next 2 years—this is going to get fixed and Congress will see the light. Because the logic of it is too compelling. One of the biggest advantages that we have over our competitors around the world is we're a younger population. China is aging. Japan is aging. Europe is aging. We are younger than them. And younger populations grow faster. You have more workers, fewer retirees. The reason we're younger is because of immigration. Native-born Americans, our pattern in terms of the number of kids is actually fairly similar to Europe's. But because we attract all this new talent all the time, we're constantly replenishing our economic energy.

And so economists have looked at it and they've said, you know what, if you pass the immigration bill that passed out of the Senate, you can anticipate faster growth, lower deficits, a more dynamic economy, more startups. And my general theory is, if something makes a lot of sense, then we should go ahead and do it rather than not do it. But that's just me. [*Laughter*] We'll—so we'll see. I'm going to keep on fighting on this.

How are we doing on time, guys? I just want to make sure—where's my tall guy? Got time for one more? Oh, all the hands shoot up. You know what, what I'll do is, I will do two, all right? So we're going to do two. I've been a little biased towards, I think, this side of the room. So I've got to turn here, and I think I'll call on this young lady because it's a young lady's turn right here. All right, we've got a mike?

Manufacturing Industry/Advanced Manufacturing Hubs

Q. So my name is "Z" Holly——

The President. Hey, Z.

Q. ——and I'm Entrepreneur-in-Residence for the city of L.A., Mayor Garcetti. [*Applause*]

The President. Uh-oh.

Q. I don't know why they let troublemakers like me into City Hall. [*Laughter*] So my question is, I'm actually focusing at the intersection of entrepreneurship and manufacturing. I'm

real excited about the numbers that you're stating about the growing jobs in manufacturing. And most people don't know that L.A. actually is the largest manufacturing center in the country by a factor of two. We're often ignored.

So my question is really around—things are changing so much with digital manufacturing, advanced manufacturing. The people and the companies that are going to really be at the forefront and pushing forward are not necessarily the same ones that are—have been successful in the past.

The President. Right.

Q. How do we bridge the gap? How do we make sure that the folks that have been manufacturing in the past can take advantage of this big wave?

The President. Well, it's a great question. So one of the great things about being President is you get to go to factories. [*Laughter*] No, really. It's like—it's really fun. You can pretty much go anywhere and see how something is made. And so I spend a lot of time doing this. You go to glass manufacturers, steel manufacturers, all kinds of gadgets, gizmos. And I put on a hard hat, and I get my safety glasses, and then people will just explain to me all the cool stuff that's taking place.

And you take an example like the auto industry, which obviously was the hub of the explosion of American manufacturing, and you walk into a factory these days and it is not at all like what you pictured from the movies back in the sixties or the seventies.

First of all, it's really quiet. It's really clean. [*Laughter*] And you might have a 3-football-field-size factory, but where you might have 2,000 people 20, 30 years ago, now you have maybe 300 because everything has become so automated, and a lot of the jobs require the kind of technical training in STEM and computer fluency that we've been talking about.

And I say all that because, even in the traditional industries, they're making huge adjustments, and the nature of jobs in the traditional industries are changing. So we want both new companies that are creating new products and services, like some of the outstanding folks behind me, but we—you're right, we also want the traditional industries to be able to figure out, A, how do we upgrade what we do to make them more efficient, drive down costs, increase markets; and also, how do we get innovation inside those companies. And there are a couple things we can do.

Number one, we've been promoting what we call "manufacturing hubs." So far, we've got four. I actually want 20. Germany has 60. And the idea is real simple, and actually, folks here at Cross Campus probably can relate to it: The idea is, is that you can get some synergy if you connect universities and research labs with businesses, with government, and focus on where is a new set of technologies that we know is about to take off.

So the one that I just announced last week is around photonics—phototonics? I should have probably remembered this before I used this as an example. [*Laughter*] But it's basically new technologies around transmission of information through light and photons. Right? We did one of these for 3–D printing, which we know is going to be taking off.

And so the idea is that what we want to do is create these ecosystems where a bunch of companies can use this as a platform to be talking to researchers, universities, engineers as something is being developed and start thinking about, how do we apply this, how do we commercialize it faster, how do we get it to market faster. And that's one of the ways in which existing companies can now be plugged into some cutting-edge stuff. And they may end up seeing that a new technology can revolutionize the processes for the products that they're already making.

Now, the good news about this is that there's enormous interest and enormous hunger for this. But as I said, the bad news is, is that Germany, which is significantly smaller in population and size, has right now 15 times more of these things than we do. And this is an example of where we just need to make some investments.

It's not going to cost us a gazillion dollars. We just have to make some strategic investments. We've got the money to do it, and we've

got the model to make it work, but we've got to push.

The other thing we're going to have to do is to train more folks to take advantage of these new jobs. As I said, if you want to work at an auto plant today, you've got to have some familiarity with computers. You've got to have some familiarity with math. And if in fact we can start encouraging young people as early as high school to start looking at some of these jobs and give them some hands-on experience in these jobs, then they may end up going to the community college, getting a 2-year degree. The program may have been designed by the manufacturer so that they know they've got a job when they go in, which means that their costs for college are going to be a lot lower. They're not going to be burdened with a bunch of debt, and they may end up making enormous amounts of money and having a good living.

So what we're trying to do is link up universities, community colleges, high schools, so we're creating a pipeline of folks who have the kind of technical aptitude that's going to be required to get these new jobs for the future.

All right, I promised I would take one more question. This is always the hardest part, you know? It's like the last one. Everybody here looks very attractive. [*Laughter*] And I like all of you, but I feel obliged to just call on one. So this gentleman, he's got his laptop up. Go ahead. Here you go. I hope he was actually listening. [*Laughter*] I mean, I should have checked actually to see if he was watching old episodes of "Sponge Bob" or something. [*Laughter*]

Entrepreneurship

Q. My name is Ariel Jalali, and I am the cofounder of Sensay here at Cross Campus. And, my question——

The President. What does Sensay do?

Q. So we're the marketplace for help. We provide the ability for you to monetize your most valuable asset, which is your mind. And the question is really more in the form of an offer. I wanted to get a jump on the competition and offer you your next gig. It's super rewarding. You get to help people.

The President. You're offering me a job?

Q. That's right. [*Laughter*]

The President. Wow, okay.

Q. That's right, that's right. And it's—you can help anyone from anywhere using nothing more than your brain and a smartphone. And you can do it anonymously. So what do you think? [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, I've actually heard—I don't know whether I was reading about Sensay, but I've heard of the notion—I mean, this is part of what technology is enabling folks to do is to be able to essentially—everybody can be an entrepreneur. Even if you've got a full-time job, you can essentially market yourself and services and skills and talents that you have in ways that somebody couldn't do just a few years ago.

And I must admit that it is an extraordinary privilege to be President. I think 8 years is a good stretch of time to be President. And constitutionally, I can't run again, and so the idea of still being able to dabble a little bit in the issues of the day while being in sweatpants and a baseball cap sounds pretty attractive. [*Laughter*]

But I think I'd have to check out your perks. I mean, I don't know—[*laughter*]—do I—do you have, like, a sushi bar at Sensay? [*Laughter*] I'm teasing.

But what I'm not teasing about is, this is representative of what your generation is going to be confronted with. There are challenges and downsides, as well as opportunities. The upside I think everybody here understands and is taking advantage of, which is, you have the opportunity in ways that previous generations did not have to create something yourself, to be your own boss, to have flexibility with respect to your hours, to pursue your dreams, to raise capital in creative ways, to bust down some of the barriers that—and gatekeepers that traditionally existed in every industry. And that's hugely exciting.

The challenge is that you have less of a safety net, because the tradition of getting one job, working your way up in a company knowing that you're going to have regular benefits, knowing that you have a clear career path,

that's what your parents' generation, the generation before you, had.

Part of my job, part of Congress's job, part of your mayor's job is to figure out how do we create platforms where we can duplicate some of the foundation that everybody needs. Right? How do we make sure you're getting the education you need to be able to compete in this economy? How are we making sure that we've got the infrastructure that you need, whether it's cyberinfrastructure or hard infrastructure, for you to be able to move services, move goods, move ideas not just around the country, but globally? How do we make sure that our research engine continues to thrive here in the United States? How do we make sure that you've got health care if it's not tied to a traditional 9-to-5 job? How do we make sure that your—you have a platform for savings, for retirement if the traditional pension doesn't work?

Because statistically, I'm sure everybody here is going to succeed, but not everybody here is going to have an IPO and make a gazillion dollars, and you're going to do really interesting, exciting work, but you're still going to have to worry about, at some point, how do I pay for my kid's college education and how do I make sure that I can retire with some security. Right?

So part of what we want to do is to build portability into the system, to build flexibility into the system, to duplicate in new ways and using new models the kind of baseline security that you had in previous generations. And that is something that we're starting on. The Affordable Care Act was an example of that. Some of the proposals that we have for new ways of saving is an example of that. But we're not quite there yet. And it's going to be up to you, this generation, to come up with innovative, creative ideas, and then to help mobilize the passion and energy that you're showing in the private sector and direct some of that into the public sector.

That's the one thing that I want to leave everybody here with, and that is: As clunky and as frustrating as government and politics can sometimes be, the fact of the matter is, is that it is still vital. It still makes a huge difference. It is going to help determine whether or not you've got the platform to succeed.

It's still going to be educating the vast majority of our kids. It's still going to be the lion's share of our research dollars. It's still going to be what makes airports function. And even with new technologies and new models, it's going to be the basis by which you're able to get from A to B. And the decisions we make now will help determine how successful we are collectively and individually for years to come.

So, even as you're doing all this neat, cool, interesting stuff, do pay attention to what's not always as neat and cool, but really necessary, in Washington, DC, and in your local communities.

Thanks, everybody. It was great.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:01 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Eric M. Garcetti of Los Angeles, CA; and White House Trip Director Marvin D. Nicholson, Jr.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Los Angeles, California

October 9, 2014

Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody. It is good to see you. And I want to thank Gwyneth and Apple and Moses for letting us crash your house. [*Laughter*] I promised that I would put everything back. But they are so generous. And, Gwyneth, thank you for not just what you did this time, but what you did last time, because it did make a huge difference to us. Even though I couldn't go, I wanted to go, but they said there are no voters that I can knock on doors in London. [*Laughter*] I'm trying to remember who drew the tough job of attending that event. I think it was Messina, wasn't it? What a scam. [*Laughter*]

It's great to see all of you. It's great to be back in L.A. I look around this crowd, and I see folks who have been there from day one, people who supported me even before most folks could pronounce my name. And I see people who have worked long and hard on issues separate and apart from my campaign, people who championed environmental sustainability and people championed equal rights for all people, including the LGBT community, and people who championed early childhood education. And so each of you have been game-changers in your own community, and your involvement in politics is just an extension of the concern and regard you've shown and what you want to leave for the next generation, for folks like Apple and Moses.

We're here at an interesting time in American history. The headlines are dominated by news overseas—and rightly so—because we're seeing a lot of tumult all around the world. The Middle East is moving away from an existing order towards something new, but that process is messy and dangerous. And what we're seeing with ISIL, I think, is an expression of some of the challenges we have in societies that have divided along sectarian lines and young people who aren't seeing any other opportunity other than hoisting a rifle and a breakdown in basic order. And we are looked to to try to make sure that we rebuild something that can sustain itself.

And when I was at the United Nations last week, or 2 weeks ago, it was the United States that had to mobilize the world community to make sure we were going after ISIL and putting an end to the kind of barbaric killing that we've been seeing there.

Ebola, something that's been in the news. And although I want to assure everybody that the likelihood of any epidemic in the United States is extraordinarily small, there's a humanitarian crisis that's happening in West Africa right now where children not much older, and in some cases younger, than Apple and Moses, are dying on the streets alone. And it's something that we can prevent and we know how to prevent, but it's been the United States that's had to mobilize the world community to help not just deal with this particular epidemic, but also to rebuild a public health—or build for the first time a public health—infrastructure in countries that haven't had it.

Russia and its aggression towards Ukraine. It's been America that's been able to mobilize Europe and the world community to make sure that we stand for a simple principle, which is, people get to decide their own lives in a democratic system and that in the heart of Europe, the kind of old-style aggression that Russia has been exercising has no place in the 21st century. And it's been once again the United States that's mobilized the world community to blunt Russian aggression.

So what was striking when I was at the United Nations General Assembly is, despite sometimes, the complaining that you get about the United States, and despite folks liking or enjoying picking out flaws and problems in our policies, when there's a crisis around the world, they don't call Moscow, they don't call Beijing, they call the United States of America. We remain the one indispensable nation not just because we have capabilities that nobody else has, not just because of the strength of our military and our reach, but because of our values and because of our principles and ideals and the things that we stand for.

Now, our leadership internationally also depends on our strength here at home. And when I came into office, we were losing 800,000 jobs per month. We were going through the biggest contraction, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. In fact, in some ways, the contraction was more severe than the Great Depression. And because of the resilience of the American people, but also because we made good policy decisions, what we've seen now is 55 months of uninterrupted job growth, the longest in American history. We've created 10.3 million jobs. We've been able to reduce the unemployment rate from over 10 percent down to under 6 percent, down to 5.9 percent.

We rescued an auto industry that was flatlining. It is now not only rehiring tens of thousands of workers, but it's actually producing cars that people want to drive. In the process, we've doubled fuel efficiency standards on our

cars. There was in the news last week that fuel efficiency has never been higher in the United States.

We've provided health insurance for millions of people who didn't have it before. And by the way, we did it while at the same time slowing health care inflation so that the average person who has health insurance through their employer is paying about $1,600 less than they would have been if the trends before we passed health care had continued. It's like a $1,600 tax cut for those families. In the meantime, we've saved over $180 billion so far over the next 10 years, because our health care system is becoming smarter and more efficient. And that's part of the reason we've been able to cut the deficit by more than half to a sustainable point. And we were able to do it without cutting benefits for seniors, without throwing people off the Medicare rolls. Instead, we're getting more people insurance and more people into preventive care that's going to make them healthier, as well as save us money.

On energy, we're not only producing more energy than ever before, but we're producing more clean energy than ever before. We've doubled the production of clean energy. We've increased solar energy production tenfold, wind energy threefold. And as a consequence, we have actually reduced carbon emissions by more than any other advanced nation on Earth. And think about that: We've done that at the same time as we've actually created more jobs than Japan, Europe, and every advanced nation combined.

High school graduation rates at an alltime high. Math scores up. Reading scores up. College attendance up. We've provided millions of young people access to higher education and student loans and grants that didn't have access to it before.

The bottom line is, is that there is almost no economic measure by which we're not better off than we were when I came into office. And that's a fact. That's not—and for those who think that I'm a wild Socialist—[*laughter*]—it turns out that actually the stock market has been doing pretty fine, 401(k)s have recovered and corporate balance sheets have never been stronger. So it's been good for business.

And yet people remain anxious about the future, and the question is, why? If we've made all this progress, why is it that there's this anxiety among ordinary folks all across the country? And there's a simple reason for it. It's that despite everything that we've done to recover the economy, to restructure energy, to reform our education system, to start fixing a broken health care system, wages and incomes have not gone up for the average person; they've continued to flatline. And that's a trend that preceded me. That's something that has been going on now for about 20 years, in part because of globalization, in part because of technology, but also because of some misguided policies. Most of the gains in our economy go to the folks who are in this lovely yard. And the average person has not seen their wages or incomes go up in the last 20 years.

And as a consequence, even though the economy has improved, folks are still uncertain as to whether, if you work hard in this country, can you still get ahead, and more importantly, can my kid get ahead, can my grandchild live out the American Dream? And everything I have done to this point, and everything that I want to do over the next 2 years, is based on the simple proposition that here in America, it doesn't matter what you look like, where you come from, what faith you belong to, where you started, who you love. If you are willing to work hard and take responsibility, then you should be able to make it here, in America. That's the essence of who we are.

And the good news is that there are some things we could do right now that would deliver on that promise. If we raised the minimum wage, which hasn't been raised in 7 years, 28 million people would be helped. 28 million people. And by the way, the minimum wage isn't mostly for high school kids trying to earn a little pocket change. The average beneficiary of a hike in the minimum wage is 35 years old, disproportionately women, folks who are trying to raise kids just like these two. And it's hard to do on $14,000 a year.

Closing the pay gap between men and women, we know that will make a difference. That's not a women's issue, that's a family issue, because women are bringing more and more of an ordinary family's income to the table. And if we help to close that gap and make sure that we're using the incredible talents of more than half of our population, that is going to grow the economy and help families and help kids.

We know that if we rebuild our infrastructure—not just roads and bridges, but high-speed rail and a better air traffic control system and a smart grid to make sure that we're using energy smartly—that doesn't just put guys in hard hats to work right now, it lays the foundation for us growing in the future.

We know that if we invest in education, early childhood education, if we put—every dollar that we put into high-quality early childhood education, we get $7 back, because kids are less likely to drop out from school, they're less likely to get in the criminal justice system, they're more likely to go to college, they're more likely to succeed in a career. Why aren't we doing it? We know it works. There are models out there that make sense.

Investments in research and development. Our economy is premised on innovation. It's premised on us being at the cutting edge. That's what we're about. And yet, despite multiple efforts by me and our budget, Congress still underfunds the kind of research that would discover cures for diseases like cancer and Alzheimer's, that would unleash new energy sources that could deal with climate change.

The problem we have right now is not that we don't know what to do, it's that we're not doing it. And the reason we're not doing it is very simple. It's not because Democrats and Republicans are both just arguing it out and both ideological and everything is corrupt. That's not what's going on. There's no false equivalence here. What's happening is that you have a narrow ideological band of folks in the Republican Party that have taken over and who are saying no to everything. No to the minimum wage. No to fair pay for women. No to infrastructure. No to things that they used to be for, including, by the way, the kind of health care plan that I ended up passing. That was originally a Republican idea.

And when you ask them, "Well, why no?," they can't really give you a coherent answer other than feeding on, I think, the fears and anxieties of folks in ways that they think are providing them short-term electoral advantage, but aren't solving the country's problems.

Now, even in the absence of a functioning Congress, there's a whole bunch of stuff we're getting done anyway. We went ahead and passed laws to make it easier for women to be able to find out whether they're getting paid the same as men or not and enforce their rights. We went ahead and provided a minimum wage for workers of companies that want to do business with the Federal Government. We went ahead and made sure that DREAM kids, kids who had been brought here from other countries and who for all intents and purposes are Americans, except for their papers, who grow up with our kids, who are friends with our children. who aspire to in some way serve in this country, we went ahead and said, you know what, we want you here, we want to do right by you.

So we're acting despite Congress. But imagine what we could do with a Congress that operated on some common sense. Imagine that. Imagine what we could do not just on any particular issue—although it would make a huge difference for us right away to be able to pass comprehensive immigration reform or to pass a minimum wage law or pass a fair pay law—but just in terms of the mood of the country, in terms of people believing that once again we can do something in common. Believing that we can rise above narrow, ideological interests. Believing that we can match the decency and common sense of the American people with our politics.

During the summer, I had a chance to have lunches or dinners or spend a day with just ordinary folks who had written me letters. And the people you met just reflected what you want America to be. There was a young woman in Minnesota who I sat down with, who had been a waitress, she met the love of her life, and he was in construction, but after 2008 and

the housing market collapsing, he had to get a job on the railway. His income was cut in half. She goes back to school; she becomes an accountant. They piece what little savings they have together. She pays off her debt, because she doesn't want to have that lingering over her because they want to start saving for their kids' college education.

And in the letter that she wrote me, she said, you know what, we don't really want that much in terms of material things. We're not aspiring to be wealthy. We just want at the end of the month for us to be able to pay our bills. It would be nice if I was able to spend less than 25 percent of our income on childcare. It would be nice if we got a little more help in making sure that we're going to be able to afford sending our kids to college. She said in the letter, understand, I'm not complaining. We have a wonderful life, and I can go take my kids into the park, and they can have so much fun. And every Friday night, we usually have a night out for pizza, and maybe we rent a movie. We're wonderfully happy, but we just wish maybe the Government was giving us a little bit of a break, a little bit of help, a little bit of encouragement. We wish that people in Washington were thinking of us.

And people sometimes ask me, with all the stuff going on, and you're getting gray—[*laughter*]—and people are calling you names, how do you do it? How do you get up every morning? And I tell folks, it's people like that woman, who reminds me of my single mom, who had to work and go to school and raise two kids and didn't have the kind of health care that she needed and ended up dying of cancer and never lived to see what happened to her son and her daughter. But there are folks like that all across the country. And they're not asking for much. All they want is that if they work hard and they do what they're supposed to do, that somebody is standing there alongside them helping them out a little bit, pushing down some of those barriers that are getting in their way.

And that's what keeps me going. It doesn't just keep me going; that's what inspires me. And I hope that's what inspires you.

We live in such a cynical time, partly because of how the media is now structured. And each side of the political divide gets its information from different sources, and we only listen to folks who feed our biases and our inclinations. And bad news tends to attract the most attention. But cynicism, which is often passed off as wisdom, did not send a man to the Moon. Cynicism did not defeat fascism. Cynicism did not ever cure a disease or start a business or invent something that changed people's lives for the better. Cynicism is a choice. And hope is a better choice.

And so I hope that in these midterms you feel a sense of urgency about this. And I'm talking to you, Democrats. Because Democrats have many good qualities, but a congenital disease is, A, we get depressed too easily—[*laughter*]—and, B, we're terrible at paying attention to midterm elections. When there's not a President on the ballot, we tend to get complacent. We can't afford to get complacent right now.

So I'm going to do everything I can in the last several weeks. My name is not on the ballot, but our values and our ideals and the things that generations have fought for to make this a fair, more prosperous, more equal, more just place, those values and ideals are at stake. And I hope you'll join me to make sure that they're there not just for this generation, but for future generations.

Thanks, everybody. Appreciate you. Love you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:25 p.m. at the residence of Gwenyth K. Paltrow. In his remarks, he referred to Apple B.A. and Moses B.P. Martin, children of Ms. Paltrow; James A. Messina, national chairman, Organizing for Action, in his former capacity as manager of the Obama 2012 reelection campaign; St. Anthony, MN, resident Rebekah Erler, her husband Ben Erler, and their sons Jack and Henry; and his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Signing a Proclamation Establishing the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument in San Dimas, California

October 10, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! Have a seat. Have a seat. Well, thank you, Secretary Vilsack, for that introduction, more importantly, all the work that you do every single day to make sure that rural America and all our natural resources and conservation strategies are working the way they're supposed to.

I also want to acknowledge San Dimas Mayor Curt Morris. Where's Curt? There he is right there. Thank you, sir, for your hospitality. Thanks to all the Members of Congress who are here, who make such an important contribution to our conservation agenda every single day. And I want to thank all of you who are blessed to live in the shadow of these extraordinary mountains for the work that you are making and have made so that this day could be a reality.

And 150 years ago, President Lincoln signed a law that forever changed the way we conserve our natural heritage. It might have seemed like an odd thing to do at the time. Civil war raged between North and South; the fate of our Union hung in the balance. Lincoln himself had never even been to California. For a good part of his life, his home State of Illinois was considered the West.

But descriptions and drawings and even some early photographs of the Yosemite Valley, had made their way back east: the cathedral peaks, the waterfalls, the giant sequoias. So too had stories about encroaching development that threatened the area. So President Lincoln decided to help protect a place he had never visited, for a nation he might not be able to save, and for a future he would never live to see. And that place is at the heart of what now is Yosemite National Park.

So it's fitting that we meet here in California, because this was the State that inspired Lincoln's actions and made possible all that followed, including this moment. Today I'm using my executive authority to designate the San Gabriel Mountains as a national monument.

Now, this could not have happened without the leadership of Representatives Grace Napolitano, whose district we're in, Judy Chu, Adam Schiff, the local officials and community leaders, the faith leaders, the youth groups, so many others who have driven this effort. I can see why you've been so committed to this cause. This incredible 346,000 acres of rugged slopes and remote canyons are home to an extraordinary diversity of wildlife. The rare Arroyo chub swims through the cool streams, while the California condor soars above the vistas. You can hike through the chaparral, amid wild lilacs and mountain mahogany. Maybe you can swat away some rare native insects. [*Laughter*]

But it's not just the natural beauty of the San Gabriels that makes it invaluable. Within these hills lies millennia of history, including the ancient rock art of Native peoples, the first Americans. And just as this region teaches us about our past, it has always offered us a window into the future. It was here at the Mount Wilson Observatory that Edwin P. Hubble showed the universe to be ever expanding, and it's where astronomers still explore the mysteries of space.

I can think of no better way to honor our past and protect our future than by preserving the San Gabriel Mountains. Not only because of its richness of history and culture and science; not only because of its scenic beauty that attracts over 3 million visitors every year, more than icons like Mount Rushmore and the Grand Tetons; but because the story of the San Gabriel Mountains is, in many ways, the story of America. It's the story of communities exploring the great West: of Native Americans and Spanish missionaries, of colonialists and rancheros, of merchants and landowners. It's the story of prospectors in search of gold, of settlers in search of a new life.

It's a story that continues today, with one of our Nation's most vibrant, diverse communities in the backyard of the second biggest city in the country. Over 15 million people live

within 90 minutes of the San Gabriel Mountains. These mountains provide residents with roughly 30 percent of their water and 70 percent of their open space. This whole area is a huge boost to the local economy.

As President, I've now preserved more than 3 million acres of public lands for future generations. And I'm not finished.

As I said in my State of the Union, we are looking at additional opportunities to preserve Federal lands and waters, and I'll continue to do so, especially where communities are speaking up. And that's what makes this particular designation so important. We heard from the community that for a lot of urban families, this is their only big, outdoor space. And too many children in L.A. County, especially children of color, don't have access to parks where they can run free and breathe fresh air, experience nature, and learn about their environment.

And that was Brenda Kyle's experience. Growing up in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, she could see those peaks from her backyard. As an adult, she spotted them from downtown L.A., on TV above the Rose Parade, and from the stands at Dodgers Stadium. Sorry about the playoffs, by the way. [*Laughter*]

But when Brenda drove, she'd use these mountains as her north star, knowing that if she followed them, they'd take her home. But she never once explored them.

Today, she's a docent at Eaton Canyon and devotes her time to taking Latino youth to discover the wilderness of the San Gabriels, many for the first time in their lives. She takes her own nephews up there to play in the river and stand in the waterfall and spot new birds and learn from the incredible natural classroom that surrounds them. And she hopes that one day they'll take their own families to the San Gabriel Mountains and say: "We're thankful our forest is a national monument. We always knew it was awesome."

And for Brenda, for the entire community, this is an issue of social justice. Because it's not enough to have this awesome natural wonder within your sight, you have to be able to access it. Right now campgrounds are crowded, parking lots are tight, and there haven't been enough resources to manage and maintain this area the way it deserves. So designating the San Gabriel Mountains as a national monument is just the first step towards a broader effort to change that. It's going to enable the Forest Service and local communities and leading philanthropists to work together to increase access and outdoor opportunities for all.

And we'll keep working with you to make sure that everybody in this diverse community, no matter where they come from or what language they speak, can enjoy all that this monument has to offer.

The notion of a national monument is interesting because it reminds us that America belongs to all of us, not just some of us. My commitment to conservation isn't about locking away our natural treasures, it's about working with communities to open up our glorious heritage to everybody—young and old, Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American—to make sure everybody can experience these incredible gifts.

The San Gabriel Mountains National Monument will join a vast landscape of protected national treasures, a wilderness that the writer Wallace Stegner once called "a part of the geography of hope." We are blessed to have the most beautiful landscapes in the world. We have a responsibility to be good stewards of those landscapes for future generations.

So let me once again say thank you to all of you who made this happen and for your continued commitment to preserving our magnificent natural inheritance and for ensuring that this "geography of hope" remains the birthright of all Americans, not only for today, but for generations to come.

Thank you, everybody. Now I'm going to sign this proclamation.

[*At this point, the President sat at a table to sign the proclamation.*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Ah, thank you. You know what, I feel kind of lonely up here. [*Laughter*] Let's bring some of the folks who helped make this happen. Come on, guys. Let's pull them

around. Can we open this up? Come on. Come on, Adam, Judy. Come on. Brenda? Where's Brenda?

Audience member. Right here.

The President. Come on. Come on up. Come on up here, guys. Come on up here. Here, you just go right up those stairs.

[*Supporters and advocates joined the President on stage.*]

The President. Good? All right.

[*The President signed the proclamation.*]

The President. There you go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:24 p.m. at Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park. Proclamation 9194 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement Congratulating the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize Recipients
October 10, 2014

On behalf of Michelle, myself, and all Americans, I want to congratulate Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi on winning the Nobel Peace Prize. Today's announcement is a victory for all who strive to uphold the dignity of every human being. In recognizing Malala and Kailash, the Nobel Committee reminds us of the urgency of their work to protect the rights and freedoms of all our young people and to ensure they have the chance to fulfill their God-given potential, regardless of their background or gender or station in life.

At just 17 years old, Malala Yousafzai has inspired people around the world with her passion and determination to make sure girls everywhere can get an education. When the Taliban tried to silence her, Malala answered their brutality with strength and resolve. Michelle and I were proud to welcome this remarkable young woman to the Oval Office last year. We were awestruck by her courage and filled with hope knowing this is only the beginning of her extraordinary efforts to make the world a better place.

Kailash Satyarthi has dedicated his life to ending child labor and wiping the stain of slavery from our world. The true measure of Kailash's efforts is not a single prize he has been awarded, but the tens of thousands of people who today live with freedom and dignity thanks to his efforts. Through his advocacy, Kailash reminds us of our shared responsibility to end the exploitation of others, especially the most vulnerable among us.

Malala and Kailash have faced down threats and intimidation, risking their own lives to save others and build a better world for future generations. They come from different countries, religious backgrounds, and generations—a Muslim and a Hindu, a Pakistani and an Indian—but they share an unyielding commitment to justice and an unshakeable belief in the basic dignity of every girl and boy. Even as we celebrate their achievements, we must recommit ourselves to the world that they seek, one in which our daughters have the right and opportunity to get an education, and in which all children are treated equally. Today we honor Malala and Kailash's achievements and reaffirm that the United States will always stand with those who defend our universal human rights.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in San Francisco, California
October 10, 2014

The President. Hello, San Francisco! Thank you. Thank you. It is good to——

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much. All right, that's it. Enough. It is, as usual, a rowdy San Francisco crowd.

A couple of acknowledgments I want to make: first of all, San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, in the house; Congresswoman Barbara Lee, in the house—no relation, by the way. [*Laughter*] Except, they're both very powerful advocates for the good people of this area. And can we all say a big thanks to Maxwell for performing tonight? He came to perform at the White House——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. What are you saying? [*Laughter*] Oh, yeah. [*Laughter*] He's a good-looking guy, I understand. He can sing, I know.

It is wonderful to be here. Let me just talk a little bit about the context that we find ourselves in. Now, obviously, the news lately has been dominated by what's taking place overseas. And a lot of the news has been scary to people and understandably so.

We have ISIL emerging out of the chaos in Syria and Iraq. We have Ebola in West Africa. We have Russian aggression in Ukraine. And what ties these things together is the fact that on each and every one of these issues—whether it's mobilizing the world to push back ISIL and go against violent extremism; whether it is responding robustly to help the people of Liberia and Guinea and Sierra Leone, but also the entire world, deal with this heartbreaking epidemic; when it comes to mobilizing world opinion and sanctions to blunt Russian aggression against Ukraine—at the center of it, leading it, is the United States of America.

When problems happen around the world, they call us. And the reason is not just because we have greater capacity, but it's also because of our values and our vision and the principles that we abide by and our willingness to extend ourselves, even when something is not directly affecting us right now. We understand that it's in our interest over the long term to make sure that we've got a world that's more just and more compassionate and more prosperous and where children have opportunity.

Now, that kind of leadership depends on us also showing leadership here at home. And the good news is, is that over the last 6 years, we have been able to make real, genuine, documentable progress in the wake of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

The economy was contracting faster than any time in our lifetimes. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month. And because we had a Democratic Congress that was willing to act, even when it wasn't politically convenient, cooperating with our White House, we were able to make sure that from 10-percent unemployment we went down now to 5.9; that we were able to create over 10 million jobs over the last 55 months, the longest stretch of uninterrupted private-sector job growth in our history.

We've been able to do it while cutting our deficits by more than half. We've been able to do it while also providing over 10 million people health care who didn't have it before and making sure, even as we provided more health care to more people, that we also did it smarter so that health care inflation has started to come down. And now individual families and businesses are paying less than they otherwise would have for their health care, and the Federal Government is saving billions of dollars in the process.

We've increased our energy production. We've doubled our clean energy production. Solar power increased by 10 times, wind power by 3 times. Doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars. And as a result, not only are consumers saving money in their pockets, but we've also reduced our carbon emissions more than any other advanced nation.

We've reduced the dropout rate. We've increased college attendance rates. Math scores are up. Reading scores are up. We're revamping our job training program so that people are able to train for the jobs that are actually out there. We've reoriented how we think about the challenge of drugs in our society so that, for the first time in 40 years, we've actually been able to reduce the prison population and the crime rate at the same time.

There's almost no economic measure by which we're not doing better than we were 6 years ago. But here's the challenge: People are still feeling anxious; people are still worried. And the reason is not because the economy is not growing. The reason is not because unem-

ployment has stayed static. It's gone down. The reason is not because deficits have skyrocketed as some have predicted. We've actually brought them to a point where they're manageable. The reason that people are feeling anxious is because for about 20, 30 years now, the trend has been that gains in the economy go to folks at the very top, and ordinary folks, the middle class, people working to get into the middle class—their income and wages have not gone up.

So, as I travel across the country, people will say, you know what, yes, my house has recovered some of its value, and I'm not as scared about being laid off, but at the end of the month it's still hard paying the bills, and I'm still worried about saving for retirement, and it's still hard for me to even figure out how I'm going to help my child go to college. And if you're a young person right now, you're worried about student loan debt.

And so, as a consequence, even though the economy is getting better and stronger, people don't always feel it in their own lives. Now, some of these are long-term trends: globalization, technology. But some of it is that we're not taking the steps that would grow the economy even faster and give workers a stronger position to be able to get wages that are higher and incomes that are higher and more stability and security in their lives.

And the reason we haven't pursued that policy is not because I haven't proposed them. It's not because I haven't fought for them. It's because we don't have a Congress right now that is willing to move to them forward. So we know that if we increased the minimum wage, which hasn't gone up in 7 years, that would help 28 million people. And we know that we should not have a society in which if you work full time, you're raising a family in poverty. But that's what's going on right now.

We know that if we strengthen our fair pay law so that women are getting paid the same as men for doing the same job, that that won't be just good for those families, it will be good for everybody. Because we can't have half our population suffering from inequalities that don't make any sense, that are outdated, that belong back in the fifties, not in 2014.

We know if we rebuild our infrastructure—not just our roads and our bridges, but a smart grid to save energy and a new air traffic control system and new airports and high-speed rail—that doesn't just put folks with hardhats back to work, it benefits the entire economy, with ripple effects that mean more hiring and mean more opportunities.

We know that if we invest in early childhood education, every dollar we invest, we get $7 back because more kids graduate, fewer kids go to jail. We know it pays off in the long term.

And all these ideas historically have not been partisan ideas. And yet we've got a House of Representatives, in particular, and a small faction within the other party that simply says no to every single step that could be taken to help working families.

Q. Yes, sir!

The President. All right, so I got a lot—"amens." I got a lot of "yes, sirs." [*Applause*] But the question now is, what are we going to do about it? I heard when I mentioned the other party—I heard a few boos. And I always say, don't boo. Vote. Vote.

The fact is that our vision is shared by the majority of Americans. The majority of Americans believe in raising the minimum wage. A majority of Americans believe in investing in early childhood education. A majority of Americans think we should rebuild our infrastructure. A majority of Americans think we should be investing in the research and technology and innovation that's always been the hallmark of the American economy. A majority of Americans believe in equal pay for equal work. So on the issues, the public is on our side.

But there's a congenital problem that we have as Democrats, and that is, in non-Presidential elections, in midterm elections, we don't vote. We don't vote. So my main argument today is that it's nice that you all came here to hear Maxwell—[*laughter*]—or look at Maxwell. It's nice that some of you took a picture with me. I'm glad to do it. But the main thing that I need right now is votes. We've got to mobilize. We've got to organize. We've got

to knock on doors. We've got to make phone calls. If our people vote, if our—if young people vote, if women vote, if people of color vote, if people who care about the environment vote, if people who care about LGBT rights vote, that's a majority. That's a majority.

So the issue now is for us to have enjoyed this event, but recognize, over the next several weeks, we're going to have to fight harder. We're going to have to work harder. We've got to feel the same sense of urgency as we do during Presidential elections. If we do that, then we're going to keep the Senate Democratic. If we do that, we can make progress in the House. If we do that, issues like immigration reform that we know are going to be good for this Nation, we can finally move forward on.

We live in cynical times, and Washington feeds that cynicism. But I always tell people: Cynicism didn't put a man on the Moon; cynicism never cured a disease; cynicism never built a business. Cynicism is a choice. Hope is a better choice.

When I started on this journey with many of you, we talked about hope. And my hope has not wavered. My hope is based on all the American people I've met around this country during these many years that I've been campaigning. And I know the core decency of the American people. They want to do the right thing. They don't think of themselves as Democrats or Republicans first. They think of themselves as Americans. And they're hoping for that same kind of leadership in Washington. And if that decency is reflected in organizing and mobilizing and effort and a sense of purpose, then there's going to be a bright future not just for this generation, but for generations to come.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. Love you. Let's get to work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:16 p.m. at the W San Francisco Hotel. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Weekly Address
October 11, 2014

Hi, everybody. For the first time in more than 6 years, the unemployment rate is below 6 percent. Over the past 4½ years, our businesses have created more than 10 million new jobs. That's the longest uninterrupted stretch of private sector job creation in our history.

But while our businesses are creating jobs at the fastest pace since the nineties, the typical family hasn't seen a raise since the nineties also. Folks are feeling as squeezed as ever. That's why I'm going to keep pushing policies that will create more jobs faster and raise wages faster, policies like rebuilding our infrastructure, making sure women are paid fairly, and making it easier for young people to pay off their student loans.

But one of the simplest and fastest ways to start helping folks get ahead is by raising the minimum wage. Ask yourself: Could you live on $14,500 a year? That's what someone working full time on the minimum wage makes. If they're raising kids, that's below the poverty line. And that's not right. A hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay. Right now a worker on the Federal minimum wage earns $7.25 an hour. It's time to raise that to $10.10 an hour.

Raising the Federal minimum wage to $10.10 an hour, or 10–10, would benefit 28 million American workers—28 million. And these aren't just high schoolers on their first job. The average worker who would benefit is 35 years old. Most low-wage workers are women. And that extra money would help them pay the bills and provide for their families. It also means they'll have more money to spend at local businesses, which grows the economy for everyone.

But Congress hasn't voted to raise the minimum wage in 7 years—7 years. And when it got a vote earlier this year, Republicans flat-out voted no. That's why, since the first time I asked Congress to give America a raise, 13 States, 21 cities, and the District of Columbia have gone around Congress to raise their work-

ers' wages. Five more States have minimum wage initiatives on the ballot next month. More companies are choosing to raise their workers' wages. A recent survey showed that a majority of small-business owners support a gradual increase to $10.10 an hour too. And I've done what I can on my own by requiring Federal contractors to pay their workers at least $10.10 an hour.

On Friday, a coalition of citizens, including business leaders, working moms, labor unions, and more than 65 mayors, told Republicans in Congress to stop blocking a raise for millions of hard-working Americans. Because we believe that in America, nobody who works full time should ever have to raise a family in poverty. And I'm going to keep up this fight until we win. Because America deserves a raise right now, and America should forever be a place where your hard work is rewarded.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 10:50 a.m. on October 9 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on October 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 10, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 11.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Foreign Chiefs of Defense at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland

October 14, 2014

Well, good afternoon, everybody. I want to thank Chairman Dempsey for bringing us here together to review coalition operations to degrade and to ultimately destroy ISIL. I want to thank General Austin of Central Command and General Votel, down at the end, of Special Operations Command for their outstanding leadership as well.

At this stage, some 60 nations are contributing to this coalition, including more than 20 coalition members who are represented here today, among them, Iraq, Arab nations, Turkey, NATO allies, and partners from around the world. So this is an operation that involves the world against ISIL.

So far, we've seen some important successes: stopping ISIL's advance on Erbil, saving many civilians from a massacre on Mount Sinjar, retaking the Mosul Dam, destroying ISIL targets and fighters across Iraq and Syria.

Obviously, at this point, we're also focused on the fighting that is taking place in Iraq's Anbar Province, and we're deeply concerned about the situation in and around the Syrian town of Kobani, which underscores the threat that ISIL poses in both Iraq and Syria. And coalition airstrikes will continue in both these areas.

One of the things that has emerged from the discussions, both before I came and during my visit here, is that this is going to be a long-term campaign. There are not quick fixes involved. We're still at the early stages. As with any military effort, there will be days of progress, and there are going to be periods of setback.

But our coalition is united behind this long-term effort. Our nations agree that ISIL poses a significant threat to the people of Iraq and Syria. It poses a threat to surrounding countries. And because of the numbers of foreign fighters that are being attracted and the chaos that ISIL was creating in the region, ultimately, it will pose a threat beyond the Middle East, including to the United States, Europe, and far-flung countries like Australia that have already seen terrorist networks trying to infiltrate and impact population centers on the other side of the world.

So we are united in our goal to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL so that it's no longer a threat to Iraq, to the region, or the international community. But one of the things that's also been emphasized here today is, this is not simply a military campaign. This is not a classic army in which we defeat them on the battlefield and then they ultimately surrender. What

we're also fighting is an ideological strain of extremism that has taken root in too many parts of the region. We are dealing with sectarianism and political divisions that for too long have been a primary political, organizational rallying point in the region. We're dealing with economic deprivation and lack of opportunity among too many young people in the region.

And so one of the interesting things to hear from our military leadership is the recognition that this cannot simply be a military campaign. This has to be a campaign that includes all the dimensions of our power. We have to do a better job communicating an alternative vision for those who are currently attracted to the fighting inside Iraq and Syria. It is going to be absolutely critical to make sure that the political inclusion that Prime Minister Abadi of Iraq is committed to is actually translated into real progress. It's going to require us developing and strengthening a moderate opposition inside of Syria that is in a position then to bring about the kind of legitimacy and sound governance for all people inside of Syria.

And so, in addition to denying ISIL safe haven in Iraq and Syria, in addition to stopping foreign fighters, in addition to the intelligence gathering and airstrikes and ground campaigns that may be developed by the Iraqi security forces, we're also going to have to pay attention to communications. We're going to have to pay attention to how all the countries in the region begin to cooperate in rooting out this cancer. And we're going to have to continue to deliver on the humanitarian assistance of all the populations that have been affected. And we have three countries here—Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey—who obviously are bearing an extraordinary burden from the displaced persons, not just recently over the last few months, but for several years now as a consequence of the civil war in Syria. That all plays a part in this campaign.

But I want to thank all the nations who are represented here in what is a growing coalition. I'm encouraged by the unanimity of viewpoints and the commitment of the countries involved to make sure that we're making steady progress.

Before I close, I do want to say something about another topic that's obviously attracted a lot of attention, and that is the situation with Ebola. We have made enormous strides in just a few short weeks in standing up a U.S. military operation in western Africa that can start building the kind of transport lines and supply lines to get workers, supplies, medicine, equipment into Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. And a number of the countries who are represented here are really stepping up and doing what's necessary in order for us to contain this epidemic.

But as I've said before and I'm going to keep on repeating until we start seeing more progress, the world as a whole is not doing enough. There are a number of countries that have capacity that have not yet stepped up. Those that have stepped up, all of us are going to have to do more, because unless we contain this at the source, this is going to continue to pose a threat to individual countries at a time when there's no place that's more than a couple of air flights away. And the transmission of this disease obviously directly threatens all our populations.

In addition, we have not only a humanitarian crisis in West Africa that threatens hundreds of thousands of lives, but we also have the secondary effects of destabilization, economically and politically, that could lead to more severe problems down the road.

So everybody is going to have to do more than they're doing right now. And I am reaching out directly to heads of state and government who, I believe, have the capacities to do more. I spoke yesterday with Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who agrees that everybody has to do more. And I can assure everybody that the United States will continue to do its part.

With respect to Ebola here in the United States, we are surging resources into Dallas to examine what exactly has happened that ended up infecting the nurse there. Obviously, our thoughts and prayers are with her and all the courageous health care workers around the country who put themselves in challenging situations in treating this disease. We are going to

make sure that all the lessons learned from Dallas are then applied to hospitals and health centers around the country.

As I've said before, we have a public health infrastructure and systems and support that make an epidemic here highly unlikely. But obviously, one case is too many, and we've got to keep on doing everything we can, particularly to protect our health care workers, because they're on the front lines in battling this disease. And we've also now instituted some additional screening measures, starting at JFK Airport, that will then apply to a number of other airports where we know the bulk of travelers that may have come in contact with Ebola would be coming through. We're confident that we're going to be able to put those in place in the days ahead.

But in the meantime, our thoughts and prayers are with the nurse, who, like so many nurses and health care workers around the country, day in, day out, do what they need to do, sometimes at some risk to themselves, in order to provide the kind of care that we all depend on. We need to eliminate those risks for them, and we're confident that we can build the protocols and make sure that they are observed carefully to avoid additional repeats of what's happened in Dallas.

But we're going to be as vigilant as we need to be in order to make sure that this disease is properly contained. The best way for us to do that, though, is also to make sure and understand that what happens in West Africa has an impact here in the United States and in all the other countries that are represented here.

So thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:31 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Nina Pham, a nurse at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas, TX, who contracted Ebola while treating a patient. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Budget Program Revision for the Commodity Credit Corporation for Fiscal Year 2015

October 14, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Consistent with section 5 of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714c) and the Government Corporation Control Act (31 U.S.C. Chapter 91), I hereby notify the Congress of a budget program revision for the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015. The revisions total up to $300 million and reflect the payments that the United States is making, pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Brazil of October 1, 2014, in connection with termination of the World Trade Organization (WTO) "*Cotton* dispute" (WT/DS267) brought by Brazil with respect to which the WTO made adverse rulings regarding certain United States cotton programs and export credit guarantees (GSM–102).

For FY 2015, the budget estimates for CCC, as amended by the Mid-Session Review, of $6.074 billion in net outlays would be increased by $300 million, to $6.374 billion.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. I concur with the Director's comments and observations.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks Following a Meeting With Cabinet Members and Senior Advisers To Discuss Ebola Preparedness and Containment Efforts
October 15, 2014

Well, obviously, the news has been dominated by the diagnosis of a second health care worker in Dallas with Ebola. And in light of this second case, I thought it was very important for me to bring together our team, including our CDC Director, Tom Frieden, to hear directly from them in terms of how we are ramping up our efforts here.

Obviously, initially, we want to express concern for the two health workers who have been affected. Our nurses and our health care workers are absolutely vital to the health and well-being of our families. They sacrifice for us all the time, not just in this case, but in the case of other illnesses that affect us. They are selfless, they work hard, they're often underpaid. And so our thoughts and prayers are with them, and we have to make sure that we are doing everything we can to take care of them, even as they take care of us.

As a consequence, what we've been doing here today is reviewing exactly what we know about what's happened in Dallas and how we're going to make sure that something like this is not repeated and that we are monitoring, supervising, overseeing in a much more aggressive way exactly what's taken place in Dallas initially, and making sure that the lessons learned are then transmitted to hospitals and clinics all across the country.

First of all, what I've directed the CDC to do is that as soon as somebody is diagnosed with Ebola, we want a rapid response team—a SWAT team, essentially—from the CDC to be on the ground as quickly as possible—hopefully, within 24 hours—so that they are taking the local hospital step by step through exactly what needs to be done and making sure that all the protocols are properly observed, that the use of protective equipment is done effectively, that disposal of that protective equipment is done properly.

The key thing to understand about this disease is that these protocols work. We know that because they've been used for decades now in Ebola cases around the world, including the cases that were treated in Emory and in Nebraska. So, if they're done properly, they work. But we have to make sure that, understandably, certain local hospitals that may not have that experience are walking—walked through that process as carefully as possible, and we're going to make sure that this rapid response team can do that.

In addition, we are reviewing every step of what's happened since Mr. Duncan was initially brought in to the hospital in Dallas so that we understand exactly where some of the problems may have occurred and doing a thorough canvass and inventory of all the workers who had contact with Mr. Duncan, including those who engaged in some of the testing that took place. We are now communicating all these various lessons to hospitals, clinics, first responders around the country. And obviously, given all the attention that this has received, we're going to make sure that that provision of information is constant, ongoing, and being updated on a real-time basis.

In addition, we are working very carefully with the mayor of Dallas, the Governor of Texas, and others to make sure that, in the event any other cases arise from these health workers, that they are properly cared for in a way that is consistent with public safety.

I know that people are concerned about the fact that the second health care worker had traveled. Here's what we know about Ebola: that it is not like the flu. It is not airborne. The only way that a person can contract Ebola is by coming into direct contact with the bodily fluids of somebody who is showing symptoms. In other words, if they don't have symptoms, they're not contagious.

What we are able to do, however, is to do what's called contact tracing so that anybody who may have had contact with someone—even if it was incidental contact, even if they weren't showing symptoms—being able to identify who those individuals are and make

sure that they are then being monitored in a way that allows us to make certain that the disease does not spread further. And that's currently taking place in a very aggressive process conducted by the CDC, HHS, and the rest of our teams.

I want to use myself as an example just so that people have a sense of the science here. I shook hands with, hugged, and kissed not the doctors, but a couple of the nurses at Emory because of the valiant work that they did in treating one of the patients. They followed the protocols, they knew what they were doing, and I felt perfectly safe doing so.

And so this is not a situation in which, like a flu, the risks of a rapid spread of the disease are imminent. If we do these protocols properly, if we follow the steps, if we get the information out, then the likelihood of widespread Ebola outbreaks in this country are very, very low.

But I think what we've all learned over the last several weeks is that folks here in this country and a lot of nonspecialized hospitals and clinics don't have that much experience dealing with these issues. And so we're going to have to push out this information as aggressively as possible, and that's the instructions that I've provided to my team.

Just a couple other points. We are going to be monitoring carefully the health status of the other health care workers in Dallas. And obviously, they're concerned. We understand that many of them are scared. And we are going to make sure that we're on the ground 24/7 to provide them the kind of support, information, and assurances that they need to get through this particular challenge.

And finally, we're also going to be continually examining our screening processes at airports. We're making sure that, in the event that we have additional cases that involve the need for transporting those patients to specialized hospitals, that those teams are in place and those facilities are in place. And we will make sure that on a day-to-day basis we provide the public with all the information they need and any updates about what has happened not just in Dallas, but what is being done across the country.

I'll end with this point: We are going to have to make sure that we do not lose sight of the importance of the international response to what is taking place in West Africa. I am absolutely confident that we can prevent a serious outbreak of the disease here in the United States, but it becomes more difficult to do so if this epidemic of Ebola rages out of control in West Africa. If it does, then it will spread globally in an age of frequent travel and the kind of constant interactions that people have across borders.

And so it is very important for us to understand that the investment we make in helping Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea deal with this problem is an investment in our own public health. This is not simply charity—although obviously, it's important that America takes the lead in the humanitarian crisis that's taking place there—but it is also probably the single most important thing that we can do to prevent a more serious Ebola outbreak in this country, is making sure that we get what is a raging epidemic right now in West Africa under control.

So, for that reason, last night I had a call with Prime Minister Abe of Japan to solicit greater support for the international effort. This morning I spoke with Chancellor Merkel of Germany, Prime Minister Renzi of Italy, President Hollande of France, as well as David Cameron, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, to make sure that we are coordinating our efforts and that we are putting in a lot more resources than, so far at least, the international community has put into this process.

So, bottom line in terms of the public, I want people to understand that the dangers of you contracting Ebola, the dangers of a serious outbreak, are extraordinarily low. But we are taking this very seriously at the highest levels of government. And we are going to be able to manage this particular situation, but we have to look towards the future. And if we are not responding internationally in an effective way, and if we do not set up the kind of preparedness and training in our public health infrastructure here in the United States, not just for this outbreak, but for future outbreaks, then we could have problems.

So, in the meantime, I want everybody to be thinking about and praying for the two health workers that have gotten sick. Those who also treated this patient with compassion and care, we just want to say thank you to them. And we are going to be doing everything we can to make sure that they're properly cared for.

Okay, thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:26 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Amber Vinson and Nina Pham, nurses at Texas Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas, TX, who were infected with Ebola while providing care to Thomas E. Duncan, who died on October 8; Kent P. Brantly, former medical director, Samaritan's Purse Ebola Case Management Center in Monrovia, Liberia, who was treated successfully for Ebola at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, GA; freelance cameraman Ashoka Mukpo, who contracted the Ebola virus while working for NBC News in Liberia and was treated successfully at Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, NE; Mayor Michael S. Rawlings of Dallas, TX; and Gov. J. Richard Perry of Texas.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Ordering the Selected Reserve and Certain Individual Ready Reserve Members of the Armed Forces to Active Duty

October 16, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Effective today, pursuant to sections 121 and 12304 of title 10, United States Code, I am authorizing the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security to order the Selected Reserve and certain members of the Individual Ready Reserve to active duty to augment the active forces in support of Operation United Assistance, providing humanitarian assistance and consequence management related to the Ebola virus disease outbreak in the West Africa region. The authorities that have been invoked will ensure the Department of Defense can properly sustain the military operations required in this effort.

A copy of the Executive Order I have issued is enclosed.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The letter referred to Executive Order 13680, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia

October 16, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995, is to continue in effect beyond October 21, 2014.

The circumstances that led to the declaration on October 21, 1995, of a national emergency have not been resolved. The actions of significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States and to cause an extreme level of violence, corruption, and harm in the United States and abroad. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12978 with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Senior Advisers To Discuss Ebola Preparedness and Containment Efforts and an Exchange With Reporters
October 16, 2014

The President. I wanted to give the American people an update on what's happened today. Obviously, everybody remains deeply concerned about the Ebola situation. I've been working with my team to address a number of issues that have been raised both publicly as well as at the State and local levels.

So, number one, obviously, our heartfelt concern goes out to the two nurses who have been affected. They courageously treated Mr. Duncan when he was in Dallas. It is typical of what nurses do each and every day, caring for us. And one has now been transferred to NIH, National Institutes of Health facilities. The other has now been transferred to Emory University. They are getting the best possible care. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families. And we're continuing to monitor their condition.

Number two, the second nurse to be diagnosed, as all of you are aware, traveled from Dallas to Cleveland and back. As a consequence, it's very important for us to make sure that we are monitoring and tracking anyone who was in close proximity to this second nurse to make sure that their temperatures are being taken and we know that they are receiving the kind of attention that they need to ensure that there's not additional spread of the disease.

I spoke to Governor Kasich in Ohio today, who is on top of it, and we have deployed CDC personnel there to make sure that they are getting all the support that they need. And we will continue to work both with them, as well as the airlines, getting the manifests and assuring that we are keeping track of anybody who was in close proximity to the second nurse.

Number three, we remain focused on the situation at Texas Presbyterian in Dallas. As I've said before, when we have tight protocols with respect to the treatment of patients, then our health care workers are safe. But because of these two incidents, we know now that there may have been problems in terms of how protective gear is worn or removed or some of the additional treatment procedures may have impacted potential exposure. We don't know yet exactly what happened.

But in the meantime, we have a number of health care workers at Texas Presbyterian who did provide care to Mr. Duncan. And we are instituting a constant monitoring process with them, giving them the information that they need in order to keep themselves and their families as safe as possible as the period in which they potentially could get the disease remains in place.

And I also spoke to Governor Perry today about making sure that Dallas and the State of Texas had the resources that it needed in order to respond effectively if additional workers at Texas Presbyterian are determined, in fact, to

have been exposed and have contracted Ebola. And Governor Perry, as well as Mayor Rawlings in Dallas, obviously have been extraordinarily cooperative, working with the CDC, working with Health and Human Services.

They have legitimate concerns in terms of making sure that the Federal Government is surging the kinds of resources that they need in order to handle any eventuality there to make sure that their folks, not just at Texas Presbyterian, but potentially at other health care facilities have the training and the equipment that they need. And so we're going to be working very closely with them over the course of the next several days and weeks in order to assure that they have exactly what they need to get the job done.

Throughout this process I've been focused on making sure that we are dealing with this problem at the source. The most important thing, in addition to treating and monitoring anybody who even has a hint of potential exposure here in this country, the most important thing that I can do for keeping the American people safe is for us to be able to deal with Ebola at the source, where you've got a huge outbreak in West Africa.

And the United States is obviously leading the way in terms of providing resources, equipment, and mobilizing the world community. So, over the last several days, I continue to call other world leaders to get them to up their pledges of equipment, of personnel, of logistics—logistical capabilities to make sure that we're getting our workers on the ground there. We've seen some progress in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, but we haven't seen enough. We've got more work to do.

And the good news is, is that increasingly when I talk to these world leaders, what you're seeing is a recognition that the sooner we control this outbreak at the source in West Africa, the less our people are going to be at risk. And I think more and more of them are stepping up. Although it's, I think, taken a little longer than it should, and that's something that all of us should recognize.

One issue that I want to address, because I know this has been a topic consistently in the news, is the issue of a travel ban. And I know that you've heard from some public health experts about this, but I want to make sure that everybody is clear about the issue.

I don't have a philosophical objection necessarily to a travel ban if that is the thing that is going to keep the American people safe. The problem is, is that in all the discussions I've had thus far with experts in the field, experts in infectious disease, is that a travel ban is less effective than the measures that we are currently instituting that involve screening passengers who are coming from West Africa: first of all, screening them before they get on the plane there to see whether they're showing signs of the disease, and screening them again when they get here, taking their temperature.

And now what the CDC is doing is gathering all their information, assuming that they're not showing any signs of illness, because if they are showing signs of illness, obviously, we want to make sure that they are directed to a well-equipped and well-prepared facility. But if they're not showing any signs, we still want to have their information: where they live, where they're staying, multiple contact information that not only the Federal Government keeps, but that will also be forwarded to the State where they reside.

If we institute a travel ban instead of the protocols that we've put in place now, history shows that there is a likelihood of increased avoidance. People do not readily disclose their information. They may engage in something called broken travel, essentially breaking up their trip so that they can hide the fact that they have been to one of these countries where there is a disease in place. And as a result, we may end up getting less information about who has the disease. They're less likely to get treated properly, screened properly, quarantined properly. And as a consequence, we could end up having more cases rather than less.

Now, I continue to push and ask our experts whether, in fact, we are doing what's adequate in order to protect the American people. If they come back to me and they say that there are some additional things that we need to do, I assure you we will do it. But it is important in

these circumstances for us to look at the history of how these infectious diseases are best dealt with, and it is currently the judgment of all those who have been involved that a flat-out travel ban is not the best way to go.

But we will continue to monitor this. I am asking these questions. And if, in fact, it turns out that I'm getting different answers, then I will share that with the American people, and we will not hesitate to do what's necessary in order to maximize the chances that we avoid an outbreak here in the United States.

Which brings me to my last point. I understand that people are worried. This is a disease that is new to our shores, although it is something that has cropped up periodically in other countries. Because of the virulence of the disease and the way it's transmitted and the symptoms that occur, I understand that people are scared. But what I want to emphasize once again is that right now we've got one individual who came in with the disease. We have two nurses who have been diagnosed with the disease as a consequence of in some fashion being exposed during treatment. And what remains true is that this is not an airborne disease. It is not easy to catch. You can only catch it through being in contact with the bodily fluids of an individual who not only has the disease, but also is showing symptoms of the disease.

And so it's important, I think, for all of us to keep perspective in terms of how we handle this. We are taking this very seriously, at the highest levels, starting with me. And my entire team is—been essentially deputized to work with Health and Human Services and CDC, and that includes, by the way, the Department of Defense and our national security teams. We understand why it's important for us to provide assurances to the public that folks are taking this very seriously, and they are. And obviously, because of the two nurses getting sick, that has made people that much more concerned. So all that's understood.

But I do want everybody to understand it remains a very difficult disease to catch. And if we continue to take the steps that we need to, then this will be contained, and that the main thing that everybody needs to focus on is that the risks involved remain relatively low, extremely low for ordinary folks. The biggest thing we have to do is make sure that health workers have more confidence, because they are on the front lines, and we're entering into flu season, which means that there are a lot of people who may be coming in with symptoms and there may be false alarms and concerns. And so we're going to spend a lot of time working with our public health workers to make sure that they feel safe and adequately protected.

But I want to assure the American people: We're taking this seriously, but this is something that's really hard to catch. And if we do what we need to do and we stay focused, then this is going to be something that is contained here. The work that we have to do overseas is going to be a lot tougher because frankly they don't have the public health infrastructure, they're not well organized, they're poor countries, and the epidemic is already raging there. So that's going to take several months for us to be able to start seeing the kinds of progress that we need to see. But in the meantime, I want everybody to know that everybody here is on the case.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

Appointment of an Ebola Czar

Q. Mr. President, do you need to appoint an Ebola czar?

The President. I will answer this one question about an Ebola czar. The truth is, is that up until this point, the individuals here have been running point and doing an outstanding job in dealing with what is a very complicated and fluid situation.

Those of you who don't know, Lisa Monaco, who does a lot of my counterterrorism work as well as national security work, has been working with our Secretary of Health and Human Services and Tom Frieden at the CDC. It may be appropriate for me to appoint an additional person, not because the three of these folks have not been doing an outstanding job—I should mention, and Susan Rice, my National Security Adviser. It's not that they haven't been doing an outstanding job really working

hard on this issue, but they also are responsible for a whole bunch of other stuff.

So Lisa is also dealing, as Susan is, with ISIL. And we're going into flu season, which means, by the way, that people should be looking to get their flu shots. We know that every year tens of thousands of people potentially die of the flu and a hundred thousand or more may be actually going to the emergency room and hospitalized because of the flu. So that's something that Tom also is responsible for.

So it may make sense for us to have one person, in part just so that after this initial surge of activity we can have a more regular process just to make sure that we're crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's going forward.

Q. Do you know who that will be?

Q. Would that be soon?

The President. If I appoint somebody, I'll let you know. Thank you so much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:12 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Nina Pham and Amber Vinson, nurses at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX, who were infected with Ebola while providing care to Thomas E. Duncan, who died on October 8; and Mayor Michael S. Rawlings of Dallas, TX.

Remarks on Signing an Executive Order on Improving the Security of Consumer Financial Transactions

October 17, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! Hello. Good job, everybody. Everybody, please have a seat. Well, it is good to be back at CFPB. I want to——

Audience members. Woo!

The President. Yes, this is an enthusiastic and rowdy crowd, this group. [*Laughter*] That's what happens when you do good things. You feel good. And this group is doing great work.

I want to thank your Director, Rich Cordray, for hosting me here today, and I want to thank all of you for doing a great job in looking out for the financial security of all Americans.

Now, obviously, right now the news is dominated by Ebola, and we've got an all-hands-on-deck approach across Government to make sure that we are keeping the American people safe. But even as we meet that particular challenge, it's also important that we don't lose sight of the other challenges that we face as a nation, especially the challenge of making sure that our economy works for every single American. And that includes the challenge that brings me here today: protecting Americans from financial fraud and identity theft.

Now, as President, I believe that America is stronger when our middle class can count on things like affordable health insurance and Medicare and Social Security; where there are rules to protect our kids from dirty air or dirty water, rules to protect consumers from being taken advantage of. And I know you agree, those of you at CFPB, because that's your mission.

And that's why part of the financial reform that we passed in the wake of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression was the creation of this agency, to make sure that we are looking at every aspect of the financial system and ensuring that the American people have the basic protections that they should be able to count on. You have one mission: You're a watchdog for consumers to make sure that the American people have somebody who's got their backs.

And because of the good work of many of the people who are here today, Americans have saved millions because they've been protected from predatory mortgage practices. You've protected folks from deceptive credit card practices. You've set up "Know Before You Owe" to help college be a little more affordable for young people and to make sure that they know the kind of debt that they're accruing. You've simplified mortgage forms so homeowners don't get tricked in the final print. But all this work, taken together, the rea-

son it's important is because it's not an abstraction; it saves people money and time and heartache.

And before you, Americans who had gotten taken advantage of often had no way of achieving some sort of compensation. Now, today, you've actually secured billions of dollars in relief for victims. You've helped to make people a little more whole after somebody engaged in fraudulent behavior.

Some folks in Congress fought tooth and nail to keep this agency from getting off the ground. There are some, frankly, who are still fighting to undo the rules we put in place to protect consumers. But I refuse to back down and go back to the days when mortgage lenders or financial firms could take advantage of consumers and consumers had no recourse. We're moving forward. America is better because of this agency and because of the rules that we've put in place.

And the good news is, is that we've got more work to do. And today we're building on the progress that's already been made by announcing new measures to protect America from identity theft and fraud.

Now, we've all experienced the benefits of new technologies that let us buy and sell things faster and more efficiently than ever before. But there are risks that come with these technologies as well. Last year, millions of Americans became victims of identity theft. Millions were victims of this kind of fraud. More than a hundred million Americans had information that was compromised in data breaches in some of our largest companies. And identity theft is now America's fastest growing crime.

These crimes don't just cost companies and consumers billions of dollars every year, they also threaten the economic security of middle class Americans who have worked really hard for a lifetime to build some sort of security. The idea that somebody halfway around the world could run up thousands of dollars in charges in your name just because they stole your number or because you swiped your card at the wrong place in the wrong time, that's infuriating. For victims, it's heartbreaking. And as a country, we've got to do more to stop it.

And that's why today we are launching an initiative called BuySecure, because you should be able to buy the things that you need without risking your identity, your credit score, or your savings.

First, starting next year, we're going to begin making sure that credit cards and credit card readers issued by the United States Government come equipped with two new layers of protection: a microchip in the card that's harder for thieves to clone than a magnetic strip and a PIN number you enter into the reader just as you do with an ATM. We know this technology works. When Britain switched to a chip-and-PIN system, they cut fraud in stores by 70 percent. Seventy percent.

Of course, no one security measure, no matter how powerful, can stop fraud on its own. So today I'm also directing Federal law enforcement to share more information with the private sector when they discover identity theft rings.

Folks here at the CFPB are working with banks to help make it easier for consumers to discover if fraudulent charges have been made to their account. The Federal Trade Commission will add new features to identitytheft.gov, and they're going to work with credit bureaus to dramatically cut down on the time it takes for victims to recover their stolen identities. And in the coming months I'll be bringing together industry leaders and consumer advocates for a cybersecurity summit focused on protecting consumers using the next generation of mobile payment systems and devices.

And I'm happy to say that the private sector is already deeply engaged in this effort. Today a group of retailers that includes some of our largest—Home Depot, Target, Walgreens, Walmart—and representing more than 15,000 stores across the country, all of them are pledging to adopt chip-and-PIN technology by the beginning of next year. American Express is pledging $10 million to replace outdated card readers at small businesses. MasterCard is pledging to provide its customers with free identity-theft monitoring and resolution support. And Citi is joining other financial institutions in making free FICO scores available to

customers, because a sudden drop in your credit rating is one of the clearest signs that you've been hit by fraud.

So I want to thank all the business leaders who are choosing to protect their companies and their customers from the kind of hacking that we saw too many times this past year. I want to encourage every retailer, every bank, and every credit card company to join them in this effort.

And even though I'm taking action today without Congress, Congress needs to do its part, as well. Today, data breaches are handled by dozens of separate State laws, and it's time to have one clear national standard that brings certainty to businesses and keeps consumers safe.

Let me just close by saying this. Last week, I saw a survey that asked folks from all over the world what they thought of the idea that "success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside of our control." Of all the advanced economies on Earth, Americans, as you might expect, were the least likely to agree with that. We think our fate is in our own hands. We think that if we work hard, that we can get ahead. For all the challenges of the 21st century, for all the tough, grueling work that's been required to rebuild this economy and people rebuilding their individual lives after a terrible recession, we still believe that our destiny is written by us, not for us. We believe that this is a country where hard work should pay off and responsibility should be rewarded.

That's the principle all of you here at the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau deeply believe in. That's what you're fighting for every single day. That's what I'm going to keep fighting for as long as I have the opportunity to be President. And the Executive order I'm signing and the great work that the companies are doing who are participating here today is going to just be one more brick in that bridge that we provide to, hopefully, all Americans so that they can translate their dreams into reality.

So good job, everybody. Let me sign this.

[*At this point, the President signed the Executive order.*]

The President. Rich, I should mention, by the way, that I went to a restaurant up in New York when I was—during the General Assembly, and my credit card was rejected. [*Laughter*] It turned out, I guess I don't use it enough. They were—so they thought there was some fraud going on. [*Laughter*] Fortunately, Michelle had hers. And I was trying to explain to the waitress, no, I really think that I've been paying my bills. [*Laughter*] So even I'm affected by this.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Executive Order 13681 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
October 18, 2014

Today I want to take a few minutes to speak with you—directly and clearly—about Ebola: what we're doing about it and what you need to know. Because meeting a public health challenge like this isn't just a job for government. All of us—citizens, leaders, the media—have a responsibility and a role to play. This is a serious disease, but we can't give in to hysteria or fear, because that only makes it harder to get people the accurate information they need. We have to be guided by the science. We have to remember the basic facts.

First, what we're seeing now is not an "outbreak" or an "epidemic" of Ebola in America. We're a nation of more than 300 million people. To date, we've seen three cases of Ebola diagnosed here: the man who contracted the disease in Liberia, came here, and sadly died; the two courageous nurses who were infected while they were treating him. Our thoughts and our prayers are with them, and we're doing

everything we can to give them the best care possible. Now, even one infection is too many. At the same time, we have to keep this in perspective. As our public health experts point out, every year, thousands of Americans die from the flu.

Second, Ebola is actually a difficult disease to catch. It's not transmitted through the air like the flu. You cannot get it from just riding on a plane or a bus. The only way that a person can contract the disease is by coming into direct contact with the bodily fluids of somebody who is already showing symptoms. I've met and hugged some of the doctors and nurses who've treated Ebola patients. I've met with an Ebola patient who recovered, right in the Oval Office. And I'm fine.

Third, we know how to fight this disease. We know the protocols. And we know that when they're followed, they work. So far, five Americans who got infected with Ebola in West Africa have been brought back to the United States, and all five have been treated safely, without infecting healthcare workers.

And this week, at my direction, we're stepping up all of our efforts. Additional CDC personnel are on the scene in Dallas and Cleveland. We're working quickly to track and monitor anyone who may have been in close contact with someone showing symptoms. We're sharing lessons learned so other hospitals don't repeat the mistakes that happened in Dallas. The CDC's new Ebola rapid response teams will deploy quickly to help hospitals implement the right protocols. New screening measures are now in place at airports that receive nearly all passengers arriving from Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. And we'll continue to constantly review our measures and update them as needed to make sure we're doing everything we can to keep Americans safe.

Finally, we can't just cut ourselves off from West Africa, where this disease is raging. Our medical experts tell us that the best way to stop this disease is to stop it at its source, before it spreads even wider and becomes even more difficult to contain. Trying to seal off an entire region of the world—if that were even possible—could actually make the situation worse. It would make it harder to move health workers and supplies back and forth. Experience shows that it could also cause people in the affected region to change their travel, to evade screening, and make the disease even harder to track.

So the United States will continue to help lead the global response in West Africa. Because if we want to protect Americans from Ebola here at home, we have to end it over there. And as our civilian and military personnel serve in the region, their safety and health will remain a top priority.

As I've said before, fighting this disease will take time. Before this is over, we may see more isolated cases here in America. But we know how to wage this fight. And if we take the steps that are necessary, if we're guided by the science—the facts, not fear—then I'm absolutely confident that we can prevent a serious outbreak here in the United States and we can continue to lead the world in this urgent effort.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:05 p.m. on October 17 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on October 18. In the address, the President referred to Amber Vinson and Nina Pham, nurses at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX, who were infected with the Ebola virus while providing care to Thomas E. Duncan, who died on October 8; Kent P. Brantly, former medical director, Samaritan's Purse Ebola Case Management Center in Monrovia, Liberia, who met with the President on September 16; and U.S. Ebola patients Nancy Writebol, Ashoka Mukpo, and Richard A. Sacra who were infected with the Ebola virus in West Africa and treated successfully in the United States. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 17, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 18.

Remarks to an Overflow Crowd at a Campaign Rally for Gubernatorial Candidate Anthony G. Brown in Upper Marlboro, Maryland
October 19, 2014

Hello, Maryland! How is everybody doing?

So I'm going to make a long speech in there. But I had to come to the folks who didn't get a seat, because this is a group right here that is truly enthusiastic. And you've got a good reason to be enthusiastic, because you have an outstanding candidate for Governor in Anthony Brown.

And the Brown-Ulman ticket is one that is going to continue the legacy of Democrats here in Maryland, people who are going to fight on behalf of those who are middle class, folks who are working hard to get into the middle class, people who work hard every single day, didn't always get started in the best of situations, but because they carried out their responsibilities, because they did the right thing, well, they've been able to get their little piece of the American Dream.

And the measure of every elected official should be how much are they working hard on your behalf every single day. And this man right next to me, every single day, he is going to be thinking about how he can help young people afford college and how we're going to make sure that everybody has health care in this country and how we can create good jobs in Maryland and make sure they pay a good wage and how seniors are going to have the protection of Medicare and Social Security and how you can save for a retirement with dignity and respect. That's what he cares about. That's what he's going to work on.

But I've got a very simple message, which is, this will be a done deal if you vote. But it's not enough just for you to vote. You've got to get your family to vote. You've got to get your friends to vote. You've got to get your coworkers to vote. You've got to get that cousin Pookie sitting at home on the couch—[*laughter*]—he's watching football right now instead of being here at the rally—you've got to talk to him and let him know it is not that hard to exercise the franchise that previous generations fought so hard to obtain. If we do that, then you're not only going to be able to continue a great legacy here in Maryland, but you're also going to have one of the finest young public servants leading the charge here in Maryland.

So I need everybody to make sure you are working hard finishing up in these last few weeks. I love you. God bless you. I'll come around and shake a few hands, then I'm going to go into the big rally.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:55 p.m. in the auxiliary gymnasium at Dr. Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School. In his remarks, he referred to Kenneth S. Ulman, county executive, Howard County, MD. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Gubernatorial Candidate Anthony G. Brown in Upper Marlboro
October 19, 2014

The President. Hello! How's it going, Prince George's County? Thank you. Well, give it up for Anthony Brown, your next Governor.

All right. It is good to be here at Henry Wise, Jr. High. I know it's tough to be at school on a Sunday. [*Laughter*] But it's great to be with one of the best Governors in America, Martin O'Malley; your next Lieutenant Governor, Ken Ulman; one of the best congressional delegations around: Steny Hoyer is in the house, Donna Edwards is here, Elijah Cummings, John Sarbanes, Chris Van Hollen; your attorney general, Doug Gansler; P.G. County Executive Rushern Baker. And it's good to be with all of you.

Now, Michelle says hello. Sasha, Malia, Bo, Sunny—they all say hi. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. [*Applause*] I do. [*Laughter*]

We are here for one reason. You just heard from him. As a first-generation American, Anthony was blessed with parents who taught him the value of service at a young age. After college, he served in the Army. After law school, he chose to reenlist in the Army Reserves. He led men and women on a tour of duty in Iraq. He earned a Bronze Star. As a public servant right here in Maryland, he's worked to create jobs and opened the doors of pre-K to more of our kids. He's drawn on his own family's experience to battle domestic violence, working tirelessly to drive down the rate of domestic violence here in Maryland.

Anthony Brown has not just devoted his career to fighting for you, he's devoted his entire life to fighting for you. And that's what this election is all about: Who is going to fight for you?

Now, this country's made real progress since the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes. Over the past 4½ years, our businesses have created more than 10 million new jobs. For the first time in 6 years, unemployment is below 6 percent. A housing market that was reeling is now rebounding. An auto industry that was wheezing is now roaring, going forward. A manufacturing sector that was shedding jobs for more than a decade is now growing at nearly twice as fast as the rest of the economy. We are less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly three decades. Six years ago, only two States allowed everybody to marry whoever they love. Now it's more than 30. About 10 million Americans have gained the peace of mind of health insurance just in 1 year alone.

So, Maryland, we have made progress. Don't let other folks say otherwise. But tonight we're here because we know we've got more work to do. We are not finished. As long as there's a worker out there still looks for that new job or better job, as long as a family still looking for a job or a better job, as long as a family that has two folks working is still having to struggle making ends meet, as long as a child finds the door of opportunity locked, our fight will continue. We are fighting to make sure that every child in America, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you love, no matter what your last name is, no matter how you worship, you can make it here in America if you try.

And we face a lot of challenges, from stopping the spread of disease to combating violent extremism, to tackling climate change that threatens the world that we leave to our children. But the defining issue of our time—the defining challenge—is making sure this economy works for every single American, every single person inside of Maryland, all across this country. We've got to make sure that everybody has got a fair shot.

So, when you cast that vote, you've got a choice to make. And it's a choice that's more than just between two political parties or even between two candidates. It's a choice about two very different visions for America. Who's going to fight for you? That's what it boils down to. Who's going to fight for your future?

Now, well, look, I believe that Republicans are patriots. I think they love their country. They love their family. But they are a broken record. They keep on offering the same, tired, worn-out theories. Time and again, they offer the same economic theories that have undermined the middle class in this country. You ask them, "What are you going to do to make the lives of Americans better?" They'll say, "Well, we're going to give tax breaks to folks at the top, we're going to make fewer investments in things like education, we're going to loosen up rules on big banks and credit card companies and polluters and insurers." They want to skinny down the safety net for folks who have invested and put money into those safety nets.

We have tried all those things. We tried them before I came into office. We know they did not work. And they're not changing their tune. Every time the Republican Party leaders in Washington have had to take a stand on an issue that would help the middle class, what did they say?

Audience members. No!

The President. They said no. They said no to the minimum wage. They said no to fair pay. Think about that. How are you going to say no to fair pay? Why would you say no to women getting paid the same as men for doing the same jobs? Not only did they say no to helping young people refinance their student loans, they voted to change the rules so that students would pay more on their loans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. The only thing they said yes to was another massive tax cut for millionaires. I know that's surprising, but that's what happened. So you know who they're fighting for, and it ain't you. [*Laughter*] It's not you. They're not—[*laughter*]. The same Washington Republicans who blocked a $2.85-an-hour raise for some of the hardest working folks in America—the folks who clean out the bedpans and folks who make the rooms and—they made it clear, if they win, one of the first things they'll do is change the rules so they can jam tax cuts for the wealthy through Congress one more time. Their leadership even said that tax cuts for those at the top are—I'm quoting here—are "even more pressing now." That's what they said: Tax cuts for the rich are even more pressing now than they were 30 years ago. [*Laughter*]

Now, keep in mind, we're at a time when nearly all the gains of the recovery go to the top. So it's pretty hard to say now is the time to cut taxes for those folks more. That's the wrong vision for the future.

The good news is, Anthony Brown has a different vision. Ken Ulman has a different vision. They've got a vision rooted deeply in the American Dream. A vision that says prosperity doesn't trickle up—or doesn't trickle down from the top, it grows from a rising and thriving middle class, with more ladders of opportunity for folks who are willing to work hard to get into the middle class.

The wealthiest Americans don't need another champion. Well-banked corporations don't—they've got lobbyists. They don't need another champion. You do. Opportunity for a few Americans is not what America is all about. Opportunity for every American is what America is about. And that's what Anthony Brown understands.

So we believe in an economy that grows for the many, not just the few. Anthony Brown's not running around promising carve-out giveaways for folks at the top. He's running to make investments in things that benefit everybody: infrastructure that creates good jobs, education that helps more young people get ahead, job training that helps workers earn new skills.

We believe in this country, every child should enter school ready to learn. And if you elect Anthony Brown, he's going to open high-quality pre-K to every family who wants it. And I want to be a partner with Anthony Brown in this effort, and we'll make that happen if you vote.

We think in this country, some higher education is the surest path to the middle class. So Anthony is not running to cut education. Under Anthony and Martin O'Malley's watch, more Maryland students are graduating from high school, more students are enrolling in college. They are completing their degrees more than ever before. They've done more in this State to hold down the growth of public tuition than any State in America. And if you elect Anthony Brown, he's pledged to keep on that path.

We believe that in America, nobody who works full time should ever have to raise their families in poverty. We had—now, just so you understand, we had one Republican Governor say just a while back that the minimum wage doesn't serve any purpose. Well, tell that to millions of Americans who desperately need a raise. Anthony Brown understands it serves a purpose. And because he and Governor O'Malley have already got the job done, some of Maryland's hardest workers are going to get a raise to $10.10 an hour. You know who Anthony is fighting for.

Right here and across the country, Republicans are running for office, taking their cues from party leadership in Washington. Just recently, they had the brass to call the minimum wage nothing but "an election year stunt." If you are working full time at a hard job at a

dirty job, and you're making $14,000 and $500 a year——

Audience member. You can't make it.

The President. ——you can't make it. Twenty-eight million Americans would benefit from an increase to $10.10 an hour. That is not a stunt, that is looking out for folks who need some help, who are working hard and are trying to do right by their families. Let's follow the lead of Anthony Brown. Let's get more folks in there that are going to fight for working class families.

We believe America is stronger when women are full and equal partners in this economy. Earlier this year, Republicans said no to a fair pay law. One of the candidates they're running right now says, "You could argue that money is more important for men." That's what he said.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, I don't know what women he was talking to. [*Laughter*] He wasn't talking to you, was he?

Audience members. No!

The President. He said no. [*Laughter*]

Look, if we're going to strengthen the middle class in this century—we're not talking about the 17th century—we need leaders who belong to the 21st century. Let's make sure women get paid fairly. Let's make sure women can take time off for a loved one who's sick, for a child who's sick, without losing their job. Let's make sure every woman can make and control her own health care choices, not her boss, not an insurer, not a politician. We don't need policies and we don't need politicians that belong in the fifties.

Because the fact is, women——

Audience member. Rule.

The President. See, she said "rule." That's true in my house. [*Laughter*] The fact is, is that women are now increasingly the main breadwinners in the family. So this isn't just a women's issue. When women succeed, America succeeds. And Anthony Brown understands that.

We believe that in America——

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Thank you. So—I've got you. I've got you. [*Applause*] Everybody, it's okay. It's okay.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So—[*applause*]. No, no, no. Hold on a second. Hold on. Hold on a second. Hold on, hold on. Hold on. Hold on. Hold on a minute. Hold on a minute. First of all, I couldn't quite hear the young man. But—hold on. But I think actually he was concerned about immigration reform. And the problem is, I'm actually for immigration reform, and the reason we haven't done immigration reform is because Congress—congressional Republicans in the House of Representatives have been blocking immigration reform.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So the reason I say that is because we have to have compassion. If you have a family member who, because we have not fixed a broken system, is worried about being deported, then you're going to be worried too. Of course, he should be protesting the folks who are blocking it. But that's okay.

The—look, we believe in an America where everybody gets a chance. That includes making sure that we've got an immigration system that continues to be true to our traditions, which is that we're a nation of immigrants. Some came by choice; some just came. But we have made a life for ourselves here. And we can't then close the door behind us.

We also believe in an America where nobody should go broke just because you get sick, where everybody should have access to quality, affordable health care. And thanks to Obamacare, the share of Americans with health care is up. The growth of health care costs is down. No American can ever again be dropped or denied coverage because you've got a preexisting condition. No woman can ever again be charged more just for being a woman.

So Republicans can keep pledging to repeal this law and deny its protections and the peace of mind that millions of Americans have. But Anthony Brown and I are going to work together to make sure this law works even better. We're going to get more folks in Maryland covered, more Americans getting the economic

security and peace of mind that quality, affordable health care provides.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. So look, the bottom line is this: The Republican Party can keep telling you what they're against. They're against—I mean, you know they're against me. [*Laughter*] We know that. I mean, you all know if I propose something, they're against it. [*Laughter*] If I said, apple pie is a great pie, they'd say, no, it's not. [*Laughter*] We don't like apple pie. [*Laughter*] So they—we know they're against me. They're against affordable health care. They're against the minimum wage. They're against equal pay laws. They're against immigration reform. They deny climate change exists at all. But the good news is, Democrats keep telling you what we're for, and the things we're for and the things that will help working families. You deserve leaders who don't root for failure, don't try to refight the old battles, don't try to peddle fear. You deserve action that's focused on your lives, on your hopes, on your aspirations for your kids.

And that's why you have to vote. That's why you've got to vote here in Maryland. You know, sometimes I hear folks say, oh, you know, the system is fixed, and these folks are trying to make it harder to vote, and this and that, and there's always a reason. But you know what, there are no excuses. The future is up to us. If you want better policies out of Washington, then you've got to vote for it. If you want good policies to continue in Maryland, you've got to vote for it.

If you don't think we need more tax loopholes for companies shipping jobs overseas and instead think we should give tax breaks to companies that are investing here in Maryland, here in America, you've got to vote. If you think we don't need more tax breaks for millionaires, but we do need tax breaks to help working families pay for college for their kids, you've got to vote.

If you believe we shouldn't saddle students with even bigger loan payments, should make it easier for them to pay back student loans, you've got to vote. If you think Congress should stop trying to deport striving young dreamers and pass immigration reform that they've blocked for a year, you've got to vote.

If you believe we shouldn't be cutting workers' wages, but guaranteeing hard-working Americans that they get an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, you've got to have your voice heard, and you've got to vote.

On every one of these issues, there is a clear choice. On every one of these issues, Anthony Brown is on your side. And look—and you know this. I mean, I'm just telling you what you already know. In State after State, the Republicans on the ballot are not for what will help you and what you believe. But you know what? They vote. The only plan they've got right now is to try to make you so afraid, so discouraged, to tell you—to remind you everything that's not working right—that's their plan, is to just make people feel like government can't work. They don't offer new ideas to address it. They want to get you cynical so you don't think you can make a difference, so you won't get involved, so you won't organize, so you won't go out and vote.

Well, you know what, I'm banking that that strategy is not going to work. I think it underestimates the American people. We know folks are still struggling. That's why we're here. That's exactly why we're still in this fight. But don't buy what they're selling. Because despite the cynics, America is making progress. Despite unyielding opposition, there are workers who didn't have jobs when I came into office who've got a job now. Despite the cynicism, there are folks who've got health insurance right now who didn't have it before. There are kids who've got pre-K who didn't have it before. There are college students who are going to college who couldn't go before. There are troops who were serving tour after tour who are now home with their families today.

Don't let them sell that kind of just constant cynicism. You have a right to feel proud and optimistic about this country's future. Being optimistic, even when times are hard—especially when times are hard—that is the birthright of America.

You know, cynicism and fear didn't put a man on the Moon. Cynicism and fear never

won a war. It never cured a disease. It never built a business. It never fed a young mind. Cynicism didn't lead folks to march for civil rights and women's rights and workers' rights.

Cynicism is a choice. And hope is a better choice. And we're selling hope. That's what Anthony Brown is about, is hope. That's what Ken Ulman is about, is hope.

Hope gives young soldiers the courage to storm a beach. Hope gives people the strength to march for their rights, for workers' rights and civil rights and gay rights and immigration rights. The belief that there are better days ahead, the belief that together, we can build up our middle class and hand down something to our kids.

I am profoundly optimistic about this country's future. And I need all of you to be as well. And that means getting involved. Anthony Brown has devoted his life to fighting for you. You now need to fight for him. You need to knock on doors, make some phone calls, talk to your friends, talk to your neighbors. Go to anthonybrown.com, volunteer. Find your polling place. And I don't just need you to vote. Go find your friends and vote. Get your cousin to vote. Get your uncle to vote. And right here in Maryland, you can start voting this Thursday.

Because if we elect more Governors like Anthony Brown, if we fill more statehouses and Congress with leaders who reflect the values and hard work and common decency of the American people, we're not just going to win an election, we're going to keep rebuilding this economy so it works for everybody. We're going to keep advancing the American Dream for everybody. We're going to make sure America is for everybody and that America's best days are still ahead. That's what we're fighting for.

God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. at Dr. Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School. In his remarks, he referred to Kenneth S. Ulman, county executive, Howard County, MD; Rushern L. Baker III, county executive, Prince George's County, MD; and Gov. Scott K. Walker and State Sen. Glenn Grothman of Wisconsin.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Governor Patrick J. Quinn III in Chicago, Illinois

October 19, 2014

The President. Hello, Chicago State! Good to be on the South Side! Oh, it's good to be home. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat, relax a little bit. I know Pat got you all fired up. Are you fired up? [*Applause*] I am fired up.

It is so good to see so many friends here today. You've got the guy who, when I first went to Washington as a young Senator, took me under his wing and helped make sure that I didn't get into too much trouble. Could not be a better United States Senator—Dick Durbin is here. Two outstanding Congressmen, Bobby Rush and Danny Davis, are here. Cook County president, who was my alderwoman, and I would not have been elected to the United States Senate had it not been for her—Toni Preckwinkle.

We've got a team that didn't just make Chicago proud, but made America proud: the Jackie Robinson West All-Stars. Where are they at? Where are they at? There they are right there. I've got to get an autograph from these guys before I go. [*Laughter*] How come—when are you all coming to the White House anyway? We've got that scheduled, don't we? Those are some sharp young men, right there.

So you know what? It is good to be home. I had a chance to see Emil Jones, who nobody has done more for Chicago State University than Emil Jones. Love him. Wayne Watson, we appreciate all the good work you're doing. And Wayne doesn't look like he's aged at all; he looks the same. He's like a Dorian Gray.

I just see friends everywhere. I just saw right over there Michael Jordan. Now, it's not the Michael Jordan you thought. [*Laughter*] You know what, I'm just going to take a second and embarrass Michael Jordan. Michael Jordan was my best volunteer when I was running for the United States Senate. He was a State Farm agent down south. This guy worked me so hard. We did seven Fourth of July parades in one day. [*Laughter*] We started at Highland Park, ended—where did we end up, Mike? Huh? And down in Park Forest. It was, like, 95 degrees the whole day. [*Laughter*] I had to burn the shirt when I was done. [*Laughter*] It was so—Michelle said, no, do not bring that shirt inside this house. [*Laughter*] But Michael Jordan was with me every step of the way. So—it's true.

Anyway, look, I'm not here to reminisce, I know. But it's just when you see your friends you've got to acknowledge them. So look—[*applause*].

So listen, I got my start in public service as a community organizer down in Palmer Park at Holy Rosary Church, just a few—just a couple miles from here. I met Michelle—she grew up just a few miles from here. Raised our girls just a few miles from here. I care about what happens here. And that's why the first thing—I don't know about you, but the first thing I'm going to do tomorrow is cast my vote to reelect Dick Durbin and give my friend Pat Quinn 4 more years as Governor of the great State of Illinois. That's what I'm going to do.

So starting tomorrow, you can vote too. You've got to grab your friends. You've got to grab your coworkers. Don't just get the folks who you know are going to vote. You've got to find cousin Pookie. [*Laughter*] He's sitting on the couch right now watching football—[*laughter*]—hasn't voted in the last five elections. You've got to grab him and tell him to go vote. If you don't know where your polling place is at, go to iwillvote.com. And then, tell them to vote for Pat Quinn. Find your polling place at iwillvote.com and take them to vote for Pat Quinn.

And let me tell you why you need to vote for Pat Quinn. Pat Quinn first took office 9 days after I did. He walked into historic job losses, big budget shortfalls, the worst recession in decades. And Pat wanted that job. He took on the tough challenges. He made the tough calls. It has not been easy. It has not been without sacrifice. But he has delivered results. Nearly 40,000 new businesses since 2009. More than 250,000 new jobs since 2010. Unemployment rate, lowest in 6 years, come down faster in Illinois than any State in America over the last year.

When other Governors were putting education on the chopping block to try to balance their budgets, Pat invested in kids, invested in classrooms. Today, Illinois leads the country in the number of 3-year-olds in preschool. He fought for civil rights, fought for the right of every Illinoisan to marry who they love. And Pat suspended his own paycheck to help fix the pension crisis. Pat doesn't just talk the talk, he walks the walk. When you look at Pat you know—by the way, where's Pat's mom? Hey, Mom, happy birthday.

When you listen to Pat, when you talk to Pat, you can tell what his mom was teaching Pat. She wasn't teaching him about surface stuff, wasn't telling him, you've got to make as much money as you can; wasn't telling him, you've got to amass as much power as you can. She taught him to look out for other people. She taught him to be proud of hard work and helping others get ahead. You can see when you see Pat—you know he's not spending money on his wardrobe. [*Laughter*] Come on, let's be honest now. [*Laughter*] I mean, Pat—I was backstage with his staff, you know, and they were, like, trying to iron out like a little—he already had wrinkles on his—they said, we just had that dry-cleaned. [*Laughter*]

But the point is, Pat is real. He is who he is. He's not trying to front, he's not trying to pretend to be something he's not. He remembers where he came from. He's fighting for you every single day. And that's why you've got to have his back and go out there and vote for Pat Quinn.

You don't want somebody who is too slick. You want somebody who wears his heart on his sleeve. When you hear him talk, you can tell

what he cares about. He cares about you. And he has a right to be proud of the progress that he has made, because he fought for you this whole time. And he's taken his lumps when he's had to because he knew it was ultimately the right thing to do. And there's progress in Illinois, and there's progress across the country.

You wouldn't know it—sometimes, you wouldn't know it from watching TV, but over the past 4½ years, our businesses have created more than 10 million new jobs. First time in 6 years, unemployment is below 6 percent. Housing market that was reeling is now rebounding. Auto industry that was wheezing is now roaring back. The manufacturing sector that was shedding jobs for more than a decade is now growing twice as fast as the rest of the economy. We're less dependent on foreign oil than we've been at any time in nearly three decades. Deficit has come down.

Six years ago, only two States allowed gay and lesbian Americans to marry. Today, it's more than 30. You've got—and it's the right thing to do. You've got 10 million Americans who've gained health care who didn't have it before. And by the way, the cost of health care, health care inflation, has actually gone down to its lowest level in 50 years at the same time.

So we've made progress: reading scores up, math scores up, graduations up, college enrollment up. Federal prison population down at the same time as crime is down. First time in 40 years that's happened. So we've made real progress.

But look, we're here because we know we've got more work to do. As long as there's a worker out there who wants a job and can't find it, we've got more work to do. As long as there's some single mom out there struggling because she's not getting paid enough, we've got more work to do. As long as there's a child out there who's not sure whether they can afford to go to college and feels the doors of opportunity still closed to her, our fight goes on. Because the basic premise that got me into politics, that got Dick Durbin into politics, that got Pat Quinn into politics, is America only works when everybody gets a shot.

I wasn't born into wealth and fame. Dick Durbin wasn't born into wealth and fame. Pat Quinn—we benefited because we grew up in a society in which, despite its flaws, despite sometimes discrimination, despite women sometimes not getting the same rights as others, despite all that, America, more than any other country, was a country where if you were willing to work hard, it didn't matter what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is, who you love, you could make here. That's the essence of what we believe.

And we believe that we're all in this together and we can help each other, pull each other up; that there's no contradiction between wanting to do well myself and me wanting to make sure you do good; that if you do good, I'll do good too; that we don't have to be crabs in a barrel, we can lift each other up. And government can help. It can't do it for you, but it can help. It can help you maybe get some health insurance. It can help you maybe get to college. It can help that child get early childhood education. It can help just a little bit on that path towards the American Dream. That's what we believe.

We face a lot of challenges. This week, obviously, everybody has been paying a lot of attention and concerned about the spread of disease. But—we've been concerned about violent extremism and the spread of that in the Middle East. We should be concerned about climate change and how that's affecting the world we leave behind to our children. But one of the central challenges is making sure our economy works for every American.

So, when you cast your vote, you've got a choice to make. And it's not just a choice about political parties. It's not just a choice about candidates. It's two different visions of America. And it comes down to a simple question: Who's going to fight for your future? Who's looking out for you?

Now, look, when I was in Illinois and I was down in the State legislature, I had a lot of Republican friends. And there are some good people here; some of them got in trouble because they said nice things about me. [*Laughter*] And I believe that Republicans are

patriots. I believe they love their families. I believe they love their country just like we do.

Audience member. They've just got bad ideas.

The President. But they've just got bad ideas. [*Laughter*] That's all. That's all.

But it's more than that. It's not just that they have bad ideas. It's just they keep on recycling the same bad idea over and over again. You know what they stand for. I mean, it doesn't matter who the candidate is, it's the same thing every time. They offer a vision of the economy that over time seems to just keep on undermining the middle class, making it harder for folks to work hard to get into the middle class: fewer investments in education, looser rules on big banks, looser rules on credit card companies, looser rules on polluters, a thinner safety net for folks who have worked hard and need that safety net if they fall on hard times.

And you know what, we tried their experiment. It's not like we didn't try it. And it didn't work. Pat and I have been cleaning up after them for a long time now. And it's not like they've changed their tune. They're still peddling the same thing.

Pat Quinn provided health coverage to nearly 700,000 people who didn't have it before. Governors around the country are blocking health care for more citizens. Every time leaders of Republicans in Washington take a stand on issues, it's no to the middle class, no to the minimum wage, no to fair pay with women. I don't know how you're against making sure we can enforce women getting paid the same as men for doing the same work.

They say no to helping folks refinance their student loans. Chicago State, you know something about that. They actually voted on a law to change the rules to make students pay more on their student loans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So the—so if you ask them, what is it you want to do, the only thing I can hear from them is, we want another massive tax cuts for millionaires. Now, I've got to say, that's one thing we don't need. And it shows whose side they're on. They blocked a raise in the minimum wage, but they want to give tax cuts for folks at the very top. They say it's even more pressing than ever that we give them tax cuts. Now, that's a tough sell. It's the wrong vision for our country.

And Pat Quinn and I have a different vision that's rooted in the conviction that prosperity in America doesn't trickle down, it trickles up. It starts with a growing, rising middle class. It's ladders of opportunity for folks who are working hard.

I don't need a tax break. Wealthy Americans don't need another champion. You do. Big corporations don't need a champion. Corporate balance sheets are better than they have been at any time in postwar history. You need a tax—you need help. You need a tax break. You need help. You need a tax break. Opportunity for a few is not what America is about, opportunity for all is what America is about.

So, instead of giving a tax break for somebody at the top, how about helping somebody with their college tuition? How about helping the single mom with childcare? Pat isn't running to cut his own taxes. He's running to provide the largest tax break in the history of working families in Illinois.

We believe in this country, higher education is the surest path to the middle class. Pat is not running to cut education, he wants to double the grants that help more Americans afford to go to college. Pat's "Birth to Five" initiative will make Illinois the national leader in early childhood education. Think about that. We should want to be a leader in Illinois.

Pat doesn't think if you work full time you should be raising a family in poverty. Pat is not running to cut the minimum wage, he wants to raise the minimum wage.

But unfortunately, Republicans running for office all across the country—and here—they're just following their leadership in Washington. They said raising the minimum wage was nothing but "an election year stunt." Think about that. Tell that to the over 1 million Illinois workers who would benefit from a raise to $10.10 an hour. Raising the minimum wage isn't a stunt, it's the right thing to do. Illinois is one of five States that has a minimum wage initiative on the ballot. So let's vote yes and send a

message to Springfield and Washington, it's time to give Americans a raise.

We believe America is stronger when women are full and equal participants in our economy. One of the candidates who are running right now on the Republican side said, "You could argue that money is more important for men." Think about that. I'm quoting. That's what one of the Republican candidates said. I don't know who he was talking to. He wasn't talking to Michelle. [*Laughter*] He wasn't talking to you, was he?

Audience members. No!

The President. If we're going to strengthen the middle class for the 21st century, we've got to have leaders from the 21st century, not the 1950s. Let's make sure women are paid fairly. Let's make sure women can take some time off to take care of a sick kid or a sick parent. Let's make sure every woman controls her own health care decisions, not some politician. We've got to do away with these politicians who belong in a "Mad Men" episode. [*Laughter*] Because when women succeed, America succeeds.

But let—look, here's the thing, all right? You all know all this. And you can tell I'm out of practice—I'm losing my voice. [*Laughter*] But what I want to really say to you here today is that the power to move our society, our government, it really is in your hands. I know it's a cliché, and I know that around the country Republicans have been trying to make it harder for folks to vote. But the truth of the matter is that so often we disempower ourselves.

When I was organizing just right around here, and I used to work with folks from churches, laypeople, ordinary folks, bus drivers and secretaries and wonderful people. And they taught me more than I ever taught them. But one of the things—the first things I always had to say to them is, you've got so much power and you give too much of it away. You just assume that things are the way they have to be. You just assume that some neighborhoods are going to get more than other neighborhoods. You just assume that the folks who are well connected, that their kids are going to get a better education. You just assume that there's not much you can do if Springfield or Washington aren't paying attention.

And each and every day, you're fed a message that what you think really doesn't matter and that your experience doesn't matter and that nothing you can do is going to make any difference and both parties are in the tank. And you're fed cynicism and told to be discouraged. And over time, you start believing it. Over time, you start really being convinced that, you know what, nothing is going to change.

Audience members. That's right.

The President. And then, it starts being cool to be cynical. And you start being skeptical of every politician. And you start believing that it's not worth voting. And I'm here to tell you that that kind of cynicism is a choice you're making. And hope is a better choice. You taught me hope is a better choice. I learned that right here. I learned that from talking to some single mom who was working three jobs and had five kids, and every single one of those kids ends up going to college. She taught me hope is a better choice.

I learned it from some pastor around here who somehow figured out a way to feed the hungry and help house the homeless, even though there wasn't that much coming in in the collection plate, but knew how to make it stretch. I learned it from some young person who somehow, out of the toughest of circumstances, ended up becoming a doctor and coming back to the old neighborhood and serving people and making them a little bit healthier.

They taught me that hope is a better choice. You taught me hope is a better choice. You're the reason that I had enough hope to run for the State senate; that I had enough hope to think I could run for the United States Senate, that I had the audacity to actually run for the Presidency of the United States. You taught me that.

So don't give up hope now, not after we've made this much progress. Cynicism didn't send a man to the Moon. Being bitter and skeptical never cured a disease or started a business or helped a child. It was hope that led to folks marching for civil rights. It was hope

that helped workers get basic protections. It was hope that made sure women had the right to vote. It's hope that's pulled us out of this recession. It's hope that reopened auto plants that were on the verge of closing.

That's what Pat Quinn believes. That's what I believe. The most important thing is, that's what you believe.

So go make hope real. Go out there and vote! Go out and get your friends to vote. Go out and get your coworkers to vote. And remember that the power is in your hands, and if you do not give it away, then not only are we going to make sure Pat Quinn is Governor once again, not only are we going to reelect Dick Durbin, but we are going to make sure that the America we pass down to the next generation is as filled with promise and potential as it has ever been.

Thank you, Chicago. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:23 p.m. at the Emil and Patricia A. Jones Convocation Center at Chicago State University. In his remarks, he referred to Emil Jones, Jr., former president, Illinois State Senate; Wayne D. Watson, president, Chicago State University; Michael J. Jordan, former board member, Obama for America; Eileen Quinn, mother of Gov. Quinn; and State Sen. Glenn Grothman of Wisconsin.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Chicago, Illinois

October 20, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Well, I want to thank Barbara for not just today, but for just being a friend for so many years, as is true for a lot of people in this room. When I look around, I see folks who had my back very, very early on and made a big bet on me. And I could not be more grateful.

And it's just good to be home, especially when the weather is reasonable, which doesn't happen often. [*Laughter*] And I'm glad that I got the kids back. We're starting to get to that point where Malia and Sasha are projecting out and thinking of their escape. And sometimes, I start getting a little choked up when I look at them because they're growing up too fast. So I'm glad to have them here, spend a little time with mom. And they look like they enjoy it. [*Laughter*]

I'm going to be very brief at the front, and then we'll have some time for questions. I want to thank Henry Muñoz, who is our tireless chair of the DNC Finance Committee and just does a great job and always dresses well. [*Laughter*] And wears things that I cannot pull off. Maybe as ex-President, I'll get some tips from him. [*Laughter*] I try a tan suit, and that's like—[*laughter*]—folks go crazy. And Henry has got the purple checks, and everybody thinks it's cool. I don't know what happened. [*Laughter*]

When we think back to when I first took office, one of the nice things about being home is actually, that it's a little bit like a time capsule because Michelle and I and the kids, we left so quickly that there's still junk on my desk, including some—[*inaudible*]—newspapers and all kinds of stuff. We always thought we'd be back every month and we'd kind of get everything in order and filed, and it hasn't happened. But it's useful, actually, to take a look at some of these old articles to remind ourselves of where we were when we took office and to think about the progress we've made over the last 6 years.

I mean, we were in the midst of almost an unprecedented economic crisis, losing 800,000 jobs a month. Unemployment went above 10 percent. We now have an unemployment rate that is at 5.9 percent. We've created over 10 million jobs and 55 months of uninterrupted private sector job growth, the longest in American history. The deficit has come down as rapidly as it has in decades, cut it by more than half.

We've got not only 10 million more people with health care that didn't have it before, but the cost of health care, health care inflation, has actually gone up slower than any time in the last 50 years. And as a consequence, we've saved about $188 billion over the next 10 years in projected Medicare costs, all of which is contributing to lower deficits, but also is saving people in their pocketbooks, because the average family that has health insurance is probably paying about $1,600 less per family than they otherwise would be paying if inflation had gone on the same clip as it was.

Energy is booming in this country. We've doubled the amount of clean energy. Solar energy has gone up tenfold, wind energy by threefold, all of which is contributing not only to a stronger economy and creation of jobs, but has also meant that we've reduced carbon emissions that create climate change faster than any other advanced nation.

College enrollment is up, high school graduations up, reading scores up, math scores up. There's almost no economic measure by which we're not doing better than we were when I took office. And if people were applying the same test that Ronald Reagan said—are you better off than you were?—the answer is yes.

But people are still anxious. And they're anxious for three reasons: One, internationally, we're seeing a tumultuous time in the Middle East. And although the direct threats against us are not imminent, what is true is, is that what's happening with ISIL, what's happening with respect to Iraq, with Syria, has a destabilizing effect that we have to pay attention to. And the United States is the only country that can galvanize the world community to help do something about it.

The Ebola crisis, which obviously has generated the only—has been the only story here in the United States for the last couple of weeks, is not an outbreak and an epidemic here. We've had one case of a person dying from Ebola that brought it in from outside; two nurses who, thankfully, seem to be doing better. To give you some sense of perspective, around 20,000 to 30,000 people die of flu every year. So far, we've got one person dying of Ebola. But people are understandably concerned, in part because they've seen what's happened in Africa. And this is a virulent disease, and it is up to us, once again, to mobilize the world's community to do something about it, to make sure that not only we're helping on a humanitarian basis those countries but we're not seeing a continued epidemic and outbreak that can ultimately have a serious impact here.

The situation in Ukraine and Russia's aggression, that has concerned people. So you have this sense of uncertainty overseas.

Here at home, the concern is, is that although the economy is doing better, wages and incomes have not gone up. And the vast majority of growth, productivity increases, profits, wealth has accrued to folks at the very top of the economic pyramid, and we have not seen wages and incomes for ordinary folks go up for a couple of decades. And that makes people feel, even if things have gotten better, that they're still concerned about not only their future, but their children's futures.

And finally, there's a sense that things simply don't work in Washington, and Congress, in particular, seems to be completely gridlocked. And so all of this adds together to a sense on the part of folks that the institutions they rely on to apply commonsense decisions and to look out for working families across the country, that those institutions aren't working the way they're supposed to.

Now, here's the good news. First of all, progress is well within our reach—continued progress. There's some very sensible steps that we can take to make sure that we increase the minimum wage, that we have fair pay for women, that we rebuild our infrastructure, that we invest in early childhood education, all of which would accelerate growth, increase wages, increase incomes, and make people feel better about their own economic circumstances. We also know that the challenges overseas, as tough as they are, are ones that can be solved if we just apply the steady leadership and build the coalitions that are necessary as we're doing in Iraq and as we'll do in terms of tackling the Ebola crisis.

And the third problem that people are worried about, which is gridlock in Washington, is solvable by making sure that people actually vote in midterm elections. Because it's not true that we have this complete dysfunction in both parties. There's no false equivalence here. Democrats are for things that the majority of the American people are for. You don't see the Democratic Party captive to some wild ideological faction. We're pretty much offering raising the minimum wage or fair pay legislation or rebuilding roads and bridges, stuff that used to be considered mainstream by both Democrats and Republicans. So the problem in Congress is that the House of Representatives, in particular, but there's a certain faction of Republicans in the Senate as well, have just decided that we are going to not do anything and obstruct any possible progress. And democracy has a cure for that. It is people voting.

And Democrats do have one congenital defect, and that is, is that we do not vote in midterms. That's what happened in 2010, and that's what could happen this year unless we're mobilized, organized, and focused. And that's why your attendance here today is so important.

I have absolute confidence in our ability to tackle every single challenge that's out there. But in order for us to tackle it effectively, we've got to have a Congress that functions.

And so whenever people ask me how am I doing, I say, actually, I'm doing pretty good. I love the work. It is an extraordinary privilege to every single day be able to work on behalf of the American people. And we're making steady progress just through executive actions and the work we're doing in terms of mobilizing around the Ebola crisis or the work we're going in terms of pulling the coalition around ISIL. Those are things that we can get done, and we'll chip away at these problems, and eventually, they'll get resolved.

But if I really want to see America get to where it should be by the end of my term, I've got to have a Congress that can get some things done. They don't have to agree—me on everything, but some basic stuff that the majority of the American people agree with we should be able to go ahead and get done.

And for that, we've got to have a decent turnout in the midterms. And that's what the DNC is all about. And that's why I'm so grateful for all your support. We're going to make one last push in these last several weeks. We've got a lot of just nail-biter races, and if we do what we're supposed to do, then I'm actually confident that we can get it done.

All right? Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:44 p.m. at the residence of Barbara Goodman Manilow. In his remarks, he referred to Amber Vinson and Nina Pham, nurses at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX, who were infected with the Ebola virus while providing care to Thomas E. Duncan, who died on October 8. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of Benjamin C. Bradlee
October 21, 2014

For Benjamin Bradlee, journalism was more than a profession. It was a public good vital to our democracy. A true newspaperman, he transformed the Washington Post into one of the country's finest newspapers, and with him at the helm, a growing army of reporters published the Pentagon Papers, exposed Watergate, and told stories that needed to be told, stories that helped us understand our world and one another a little bit better. The standard he set—a standard for honest, objective, meticulous reporting—encouraged so many others to enter the profession. And that standard is why, last year, I was proud to honor Ben with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Today we offer our thoughts and prayers to Ben's family and all who were fortunate to share in what truly was a good life.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Situation in or in Relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
October 21, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo declared in Executive Order 13413 of October 27, 2006, is to continue in effect beyond October 27, 2014.

The situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has been marked by widespread violence and atrocities that continue to threaten regional stability, continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13413 with respect to the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Senior Advisers To Discuss Ebola Preparedness and Containment Efforts and an Exchange With Reporters
October 22, 2014

The President. Well, I wanted to give you an update I just received from the team that's been working day and night to make sure that the American people are safe and that we're dealing effectively with not just the Ebola case here, but the outbreak and epidemic that's taking place in West Africa.

A number of things make us cautiously more optimistic about the situation here in the United States. First of all, we now have seen dozens of persons who had initial interaction with Mr. Duncan, including his family and friends, and in some cases people who have had fairly significant contact with him, have now been cleared, and we're confident that they do not have Ebola. And it just gives, I think, people one more sense of how difficult it is to get this disease. These are people, in some cases, who were living with Mr. Duncan and had fairly significant contact with him. They, we now know, do not have Ebola.

And so, once again, I want to emphasize to the public: This is not airborne; you have to have had contact with the bodily fluids of somebody who is actually showing symptoms of Ebola, which is why it makes it so hard to catch, although it obviously is very virulent if in fact you do come into contact with such bodily fluids.

Our hearts and thoughts and prayers are still with the two nurses who were affected. Again, we're cautiously optimistic. They seem to be doing better, and we continue to think about them.

I had a chance to talk to a number of their coworkers at Texas Presbyterian today. Spirits were good. People were very proud of the work that they've done and understandably so.

Because as I've said before, when it comes to taking care of us and our families, nobody is more important than the frontline health workers and nurses in particular who so often are the ones who have immediate and ongoing contact with patients. And they're very proud of what they've done and want to make sure that everybody understands how seriously they take their work and how important they consider their jobs to be.

In addition, what we've also seen is two American patients, who got Ebola outside, but were brought here to be treated, have now been cleared. They have been cured, and we're obviously very happy about that. I know their families are thrilled about that.

And finally, we also received news that, according to the World Health Organization, both Nigeria and Senegal are Ebola-free. Now, these are countries that are adjoining the three West African countries that are experiencing the most severe aspects of this disease. And again, it gives you some sense that when it's caught early, and where the public health infrastructure operates effectively, this outbreak can be stopped.

What we've also been talking about, then, is dealing with the particulars of the situations as it arose in Dallas and what we're doing to make sure that we don't see a repeat of some of the problems with the protocols that took place in Dallas.

First of all, with respect to Dallas, working in coordination with Governor Perry, Mayor Rawlings, and health officials in Dallas and throughout Texas, we now are very confident that if any additional cases came up in Texas, that there is a plan in place where they would go receive first-class treatment. And we continue to actively monitor those who remain at risk because they were involved in Mr. Duncan's treatment, although a number of them rolled off of the list of people who could possibly get it today. And each day, more and more folks are cleared and can be confident that they don't have Ebola.

We've surged resources both to Dallas and to Cleveland, making sure that the CDC is on the ground so that if additional cases arise out of the Dallas situation, as well as the second nurse who flew to Cleveland, that we're on the ground and we don't repeat any problems with respect to the protocols that have to be followed.

The CDC has refined and put in place guidelines that will make sure that both in terms of protective gear and how it's disposed, and how we monitor anybody who might have Ebola, that those are tighter. And our team has spent a lot of time reaching out to hospitals, doctors, nurses' associations, health care workers. There were thousands who were trained at the Javits Center just yesterday, I believe.

And so we're going to systematically and steadily just make sure that every hospital has a plan; that they are displaying CDC information that has currently been provided so that they can take step-by-step precautions when they're dealing with somebody who might have Ebola.

And I'm confident that over the course of several weeks and months, each hospital, working in conjunction with public health officials in those States, are going to be able to train and develop the kinds of systems that assure that people are prepared if and when a case like this comes up. And that ultimately is going to be the most important thing.

This is a disease where, if it's caught early and the hospital knows what to do early, it doesn't present a massive risk of spreading. But we have to make sure that everybody is aware of it. And obviously, given all the attention that this situation has received, as you might expect, hospitals' workers and the CEOs of hospitals and dentists and anybody who has contact with potential patients is paying a lot more attention and is much more open to making sure that they've got a sound plan in place. And we're going to be helping everybody to make sure that they put that plan in place.

In addition, I know that there's been a lot of concern around the issue of individuals traveling from the three nations in West Africa that are most affected. So, as has already been announced, what's now happening is, all flights from those nations are being funneled into three airports—or five airports, rather. Each of those airports have systems in place so that all

the passengers getting off those flights will be monitored.

The CDC announced today that it's going to take some additional steps to provide information to States so that they can actively monitor what's taking place with those persons for a period of 21 days in order to protect the citizens of their various States and will continue to put in place additional measures as they make sense in order to assure that we don't see a continuing spread of this disease.

And on the international front, the good news is, is that along with the billion dollars that we are putting in, we've now seen an additional billion dollars from the world community to start building isolation units in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. Health workers are beginning to surge there. We've got 100 CDC personnel on the ground, as well as more than 500 military personnel.

I should emphasize that our military personnel is not treating patients. But what we're doing, which nobody else really has the capacity to do, is to build the infrastructure—the logistical systems, the air transport, the construction—so that, as other countries start making contributions, they can be confident that it's going to get in where it's most needed and it's going to be coordinated effectively. And we just want to thank, as always, our men and women in uniform who are doing an outstanding job there.

We're already starting to see some very modest signs of progress in Liberia. We're concerned about some spike in cases in Guinea. One of the good things that has come out of all the attention that this has received over the last several months—and frankly, the coordination of the United States with the international community—is that people understand, if we are going to protect all of our citizens globally, we have to do a better job of getting into these countries quicker and providing more help faster. And American leadership has been vital in that entire process.

So the top line, I think, the key message I want to deliver, is that although, obviously, people had concerns with Mr. Duncan—and our hearts still go out to his family as well as the two nurses that were infected—in fact, what we're seeing is that the public health infrastructure and systems that we are now putting in place across the board around the country should give the American people confidence that we're going to be in a position to deal with any additional cases of Ebola that might crop up without it turning into an outbreak.

And I want to emphasize again: This is a very hard disease to get. And in a country like the United States that has a strong public health infrastructure and outstanding health workers and hospitals and systems, the prospect of an outbreak here is extremely low. If people want to make sure that, as we go into the holiday season, their families are safe, the very best thing they can do is make sure that everybody in the family is getting a flu shot. Because we know that tens of thousands of people will be affected by the flu this season, as is true every season.

I'll say one other thing about this. If there's a silver lining in all the attention that the Ebola situation has received over the last several weeks, it's a reminder of how important our public health systems are. And in many ways, what this has done is elevated that importance. There may come a time, sometime in the future, where we are dealing with a airborne disease that is much easier to catch and is deadly. And in some ways, this has created a trial run for Federal, State, and local public health officials and health care providers, as well as the American people, to understand the nature of that and why it's so important that we're continually building out our public health systems, but we're also practicing them and keeping them in tiptop shape and investing in them. Because oftentimes, the best cure is to prevent getting diseases in the first place, and that's true for individuals, it's true for the country as a whole. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

Shooting in Ottawa, Canada

Q. Can you say something about Canada?

The President. Oh, thank you very much. I appreciate—thank you. The—I had a chance

to talk with Prime Minister Harper this afternoon. Obviously, the situation there is tragic. Just 2 days ago, a Canadian soldier had been killed in an attack. We now know that another young man was killed today. And I expressed on behalf of the American people our condolences to the family and to the Canadian people as a whole.

We don't yet know—have all the information about what motivated the shooting. We don't yet have all the information about whether this was part of a broader network or plan or whether this was an individual or series of individuals who decided to take these actions. But it emphasizes the degree to which we have to remain vigilant when it comes to dealing with these kinds of acts of senseless violence or terrorism. And I pledged, as always, to make sure that our national security teams are coordinating very closely, given not only is Canada one of our closest allies in the world, but they're our neighbors and our friends, and obviously, there's a lot of interaction between Canadians and the United States, where we have such a long border.

And it's very important, I think, for us to recognize that when it comes to dealing with terrorist activity, that Canada and the United States has to be entirely in sync. We have in the past; I'm confident we will continue to do so in the future. And Prime Minister Harper was very appreciative of the expressions of concern by the American people.

I had a chance to travel to the Parliament in Ottawa. I'm very familiar with that area and am reminded of how warmly I was received and how wonderful the people there were. And so, obviously, we're all shaken by it, but we're going to do everything we can to make sure that we're standing side by side with Canada during this difficult time.

U.S. Counterterrorism Efforts

Q. What does the Canadian attack mean to U.S. security, Mr. President?

The President. Thank you. Well, we don't have enough information yet. So, as we understand better exactly what happened, this obviously is something that we'll make sure to factor in, in the ongoing efforts that we have to counter terrorist attacks in our country.

Every single day, we have a whole lot of really smart, really dedicated, really hard-working people—including a couple in this room—who are monitoring risks and making sure that we're doing everything we need to do to protect the American people. And they don't get a lot of fanfare; they don't get a lot of attention. There are a lot of possible threats that are foiled or disrupted that don't always get reported on. And the work of our military, our intelligence teams, the Central Intelligence Agency, the intelligence community more broadly, our local law enforcement and State law enforcement officials who coordinate closely with us—we owe them all a great deal of thanks. All right?

Thank you, guys. Appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were White House Ebola Response Coordinator Ronald A. Klain; Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell; National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice; Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco; and State Department Ebola Coordinator Nancy J. Powell. In his remarks, the President referred to Nina Pham and Amber Vinson, nurses at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX, who were infected with the Ebola virus while providing care to Thomas E. Duncan, who died on October 8; U.S. Ebola patients Kent P. Brantly and Nancy Writebol, who were successfully treated and subsequently released from care; Patrice Vincent, a warrant officer who was killed in a hit-and-run incident in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, on October 20; and Cpl. Nathan Cirillo, who was killed in the shooting at the Parliament building in Ottawa, Canada.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan
October 24, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Sudan is to continue in effect beyond November 3, 2014.

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Sudan that led to the declaration of a national emergency in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997, and the expansion of that emergency in Executive Order 13400 of April 26, 2006, and with respect to which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13412 of October 13, 2006, has not been resolved. These actions and policies continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13067 with respect to Sudan.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
October 25, 2014

Hi, everybody. This week, we remained focused on our fight against Ebola. In Dallas, dozens of family, friends, and others who had been in close contact with the first patient, Mr. Duncan, were declared free of Ebola, a reminder that this disease is actually very hard to catch. Across Dallas, others being monitored, including health care workers who were most at risk, were also declared Ebola-free.

Two Americans—patients in Georgia and Nebraska who contracted the disease in West Africa—recovered and were released from the hospital. The first of the two Dallas nurses who were diagnosed, Nina Pham, was declared Ebola-free, and yesterday I was proud to welcome her to the Oval Office and give her a big hug. The other nurse, Amber Vinson, continues to improve as well. And in Africa, the countries of Senegal and Nigeria were declared free of Ebola, a reminder that this disease can be contained and defeated.

In New York City, medical personnel moved quickly to isolate and care for the patient there, a doctor who recently returned from West Africa. The city and State of New York have strong public health systems, and they've been preparing for this possibility. Because of the steps we've taken in recent weeks, our CDC experts were already at the hospital, helping staff prepare for this kind of situation. Before the patient was even diagnosed, we deployed one of our new CDC rapid response teams. And I've assured Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio that they'll have all the Federal support they need as they go forward.

More broadly, this week we continued to step up our efforts across the country. New CDC guidelines and outreach is helping hospitals improve training and protect their health

care workers. The Defense Department's new team of doctors, nurses, and trainers will respond quickly if called upon to help.

New travel measures are now directing all travelers from the three affected countries in West Africa into five U.S. airports, where we're conducting additional screening. Starting this week, these travelers will be required to report their temperatures and any symptoms on a daily basis for 21 days until we're confident they don't have Ebola. Here at the White House, my new Ebola Response Coordinator is working to ensure a seamless response across the Federal Government. And we have been examining the protocols for protecting our brave health care workers, and guided by the science, we'll continue to work with State and local officials to take the necessary steps to ensure the safety and health of the American people.

In closing, I want to leave you with some basic facts. First, you cannot get Ebola easily. You can't get it through casual contact with someone. Remember, down in Dallas, even Mr. Duncan's family—who lived with him and helped care for him—even they did not get Ebola. The only way you can get this disease is by coming into direct contact with the bodily fluids of someone with symptoms. That's the science. Those are the facts.

Sadly, Mr. Duncan did not survive, and we continue to keep his family in our prayers. At the same time, it's important to remember that of the seven Americans treated so far for Ebola—the five who contracted it in West Africa, plus the two nurses from Dallas—all seven have survived. Let me say that again: seven Americans treated; all seven survived. I've had two of them in the Oval Office. And now we're focused on making sure the patient in New York receives the best care as well.

So here's the bottom line: Patients can beat this disease, and we can beat this disease. But we have to stay vigilant. We have to work together at every level—Federal, State, and local—and we have to keep leading the global response, because the best way to stop this disease, the best way to keep Americans safe, is to stop it at its source, in West Africa.

And we have to be guided by the science. We have to be guided by the facts, not fear. Yesterday New Yorkers showed us the way. They did what they do every day: jumping on buses, riding the subway, crowding into elevators, heading into work, gathering in parks. That spirit—that determination to carry on—is part of what makes New York one of the great cities in the world. And that's the spirit all of us can draw upon, as Americans, as we meet this challenge together.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:30 p.m. on October 24 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on October 25. In the address, the President referred to Kent P. Brantly, former medical director, Samaritan's Purse Ebola Case Management Center in Monrovia, Liberia, who was treated successfully for Ebola at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, GA, and met with the President on September 16; freelance cameraman Ashoka Mukpo, who contracted the Ebola virus while working for NBC News in Liberia and was treated successfully at Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, NE; Craig A. Spencer, a Doctors Without Borders physician who was infected with the Ebola virus while working in Guinea and was under treatment at Bellevue Hospital in New York City; White House Ebola Response Coordinator Ronald A. Klain; and U.S. Ebola patients Nancy Writebol and Richard A. Sacra, who were infected with the Ebola virus in West Africa and treated successfully in the United States. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 24, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 25.

Statement on Parliamentary Elections in Tunisia
October 26, 2014

On behalf of all Americans, I congratulate the people of Tunisia on the democratic election of a new Parliament, an important milestone in Tunisia's historic political transition. In

casting their ballots today, Tunisians continued to inspire people across their region and around the world, as they did during Tunisia's 2011 revolution and with the adoption of a new Constitution earlier this year. Tunisia's example reminds us all that dialogue, consensus-building, political pluralism, and peaceful assembly help form the bedrock of democracy. The United States reaffirms its commitment to supporting democracy in Tunisia, to our continued friendship with the people of Tunisia, and to partnering with the next Government as it works to promote economic opportunity, protect freedom, and ensure security for all Tunisians.

Statement on Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine
October 27, 2014

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate the people of Ukraine on holding successful parliamentary elections on October 26. Despite a challenging security environment in certain regions, millions of Ukrainians turned out across the country to cast their ballots in an orderly and peaceful manner. I commend the Government of Ukraine for the conduct of the campaign and election day vote, which international monitoring organizations assess to have been largely in line with international standards.

At the same time, it is clear that Russian authorities occupying Crimea and Russian-backed separatists in parts of eastern Ukraine prevented many Ukrainian citizens from exercising their democratic rights to participate in national elections and cast their votes. I call on Russia to ensure that its proxies in eastern Ukraine allow voters in the parts of Donetsk and Luhansk subject to the Special Status Law to choose their representatives in legitimate local elections on December 7, in keeping with the agreement that Russia and separatist representatives signed in Minsk, Belarus, on September 5, 2014. The United States will not recognize any election held in separatist-held areas that does not comport with Ukrainian law and is not held with the express consent and under the authority of the Ukrainian Government.

Yesterday's parliamentary vote represents another important milestone in Ukraine's democratic development. We look forward to the convening of the new Parliament and the quick formation of a strong, inclusive Government. The United States stands ready to support the choices of the Ukrainian people and Ukraine's new Government as it enacts and implements the reforms necessary to promote further democratic development, strengthen the rule of law, and foster economic stability and growth in Ukraine. The United States also will continue to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity as it works toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the east and a return of Crimea and will stand with its people as they seek to build a more secure, prosperous, and democratic future.

Remarks on the United States Response to the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa and an Exchange With Reporters
October 28, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. I just want to offer a quick update on Ebola and a number of the issues that have been raised.

We know that the best way to protect Americans ultimately is going to stop this outbreak at the source. And I just had the privilege of speaking with some of the men and women who are working to do just that: our Disaster Assistance Response Team on the ground in West Africa.

First and foremost, I thanked them for their incredible dedication and compassion. These are the folks that, from the minute that we saw this Ebola outbreak growing larger than we

had seen traditionally, were deployed, were on the ground, and were helping to coordinate the countries where the outbreak is happening to make sure that the response was effective.

And it's typical of what America does best: When others are in trouble, when disease or disaster strikes, Americans help. And no other nation is doing as much to make sure that we contain and ultimately eliminate this outbreak than America.

We deployed this DART team to West Africa back in early August. They're now the strategic and operational backbone of America's response. They've increased the number of Ebola treatment units and burial teams. They've expanded the pipeline of medical personnel and equipment and supplies. They've launched an aggressive education campaign in country. The bottom line is, is that they're doing what it takes to make sure that medical personnel and health care workers from all countries have what they need to get the job done.

And the good news is, is that it's starting to have an impact. Based on the conversations that I had today with them, they're starting to see some progress in Liberia, and the infrastructure is beginning to get built out. That's thanks to the incredible work and dedication of folks from the United States who are leading the way in helping Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone.

And it's critical that we maintain that leadership. The truth is that we're going to have to stay vigilant here at home until we stop the epidemic at its source. And for that, we're going to need to make sure that our doctors and our health care professionals here in the United States are properly trained and informed and that they are coordinated if and when an Ebola case crops up here in the United States. But what's also critically important is making sure that all the talent, skill, compassion, professionalism, dedication, and experience of our folks here can be deployed to help those countries deal with this outbreak at the source.

And that's why yesterday the CDC announced that we're going to have new monitoring and movement guidance that is sensible, based in science, and tailored to the unique circumstances of each health worker that may be returning from one of these countries after they have provided the kind of help that they need. In fact, tomorrow I'm going to have a chance to meet with doctors and public health workers who have already returned from fighting this disease in West Africa or who are about to go, not only to say thank you to them and give them encouragement, but to make sure that we're getting input from them based on the science, based on the facts, based on experience, about how the battle to deal with Ebola is going and how our policies can support the incredible heroism that they are showing.

So we don't want to discourage our health care workers from going to the frontlines and dealing with this in an effective way. Our medical teams here are getting better and better prepared and trained for the possibility of an isolated Ebola case here in the United States. But in the meantime, we've got to make sure that we continue to provide the support of health workers who are going overseas to deal with the disease where it really has been raging.

It's also important for the American people to remind themselves that only two people so far have contracted Ebola on American soil: the two Dallas nurses who treated a patient who contracted it in West Africa. Today, both of them are disease-free. I met with one of them, Nina Pham, last week, and she is doing wonderfully. And I just had a chance to get off the phone with Amber Vinson, who is on her way back home and also, as many of you saw in her press statement today, is doing well also.

Of the seven Americans treated for Ebola so far, all have survived. Right now the only American still undergoing treatment is Dr. Craig Spencer, who contracted the disease abroad while working to protect others. And we should be saluting his service. And we are focused on getting him the best care possible as well. And our thoughts and prayers are with him.

Meanwhile, the West African nations of Senegal and Nigeria have now been declared Ebola-free. That's in part because of outstanding work led in many cases by Americans work-

ing in coordination with those countries to make sure that we did not see an outbreak there.

So the point is, is that this disease can be contained. It will be defeated. Progress is possible. But we're going to have to stay vigilant, and we've got to make sure that we're working together. We have to keep leading the global response. America cannot look like it is shying away, because other people are watching what we do, and if we don't have a robust international response in West Africa, then we are actually endangering ourselves here back home. In order to do that, we've got to make sure that those workers who are willing and able and dedicated to go over there in a really tough job, that they're applauded, thanked, and supported. That should be our priority.

And we can make sure that when they come back, they are being monitored in a prudent fashion. But we want to make sure that we understand that they are doing God's work over there. And they're doing that to keep us safe. And I want to make sure that every policy we put in place is supportive of their efforts, because if they are successful, then we're not going to have to worry about Ebola here at home.

America, in the end, is not defined by fear. That's not who we are. America is defined by possibility. And when we see a problem and we see a challenge, then we fix it. We don't just react based on our fears. We react based on facts and judgment and making smart decisions. That's how we have built this country and sustained this country and protected this country. That's why America has defined progress, because we're not afraid when challenges come up.

Thanks to our military, our dedicated medical and health care professionals, the men and women who I spoke to today in West Africa, that leadership and progress continues. And we're going to keep on making progress, and we are going to solve this particular problem just like we've solved every other problem.

But it starts with us having the confidence and understanding that, as challenging as this may be, this is something that will get fixed, in large part because we've got extraordinary Americans with experience, talent, dedication, who are willing to put themselves on the front lines to get things done.

I'll have more about—more to say about this tomorrow when I have those workers here. But I just wanted to emphasize how proud I am of the people who are already involved in this effort and how confident I am after speaking to them that in fact we're going to get this problem under control.

All right? Thank you.

Domestic Ebola Containment Policies

Q. Are you concerned, sir, that there might be some confusion between the quarantine rules used by the military and used by health care workers and by some States?

The President. Well, the military is in a different situation, obviously, because they are, first of all, not treating patients. Second of all, they are not there voluntarily, it's part of their mission that's been assigned to them by their commanders and ultimately by me, the Commander in Chief. So we don't expect to have similar rules for our military as we do for civilians. They are already—by definition, if they're in the military—under more circumscribed conditions.

When we have volunteers who are taking time out from their families, from their loved ones, and so forth, to go over there because they have very particular expertise to tackle a very difficult job, we want to make sure that when they come back, that we are prudent, that we are making sure that they are not at risk themselves or at risk of spreading the disease, but we don't want to do things that aren't based on science and best practices. Because if we do, then we're just putting another barrier on somebody who's already doing really important work on our behalf. And that's not something that I think any of us should want to see happen.

All right? Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:02 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Amber Vinson and Nina Pham, nurses at Texas Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX, who were infected with

the Ebola virus while providing care to Thomas E. Duncan, who died on October 8; and U.S. Ebola patients Kent P. Brantly, Nancy Writebol, Ashoka Mukpo, and Richard A. Sacra, who were infected with the Ebola virus in West Africa and treated successfully in the United States.

Remarks to an Overflow Crowd at a Campaign Rally for Gubernatorial Candidate Mary P. Burke in Milwaukee, Wisconsin
October 28, 2014

Hello, everybody! Well, it is good to be—[*applause*]—hold on a second—it's good to be back in Milwaukee. I was saying when I got off the plane, it's good to be back in the Midwest because it's a little too warm in DC. [*Laughter*] And those of us from the Midwest, we like it a little nippy.

But listen, I'm going to make a big speech in the other room. I just wanted to come by and say, number one, thank you for supporting Mary Burke. She is going to be a great Governor for a great State.

The second thing I wanted to say—and I'm going to say it real loud in the other room—is she will be your next Governor as long as folks vote.

Now, let's face it, first of all, some of you here are too young to vote. [*Laughter*] Second of all, if you're here, you're probably going to vote. Which brings me to the third point, which is we need you to go talk to your friends, your neighbors, you coworkers. You've got that cousin on the couch who's watching the old Packers games, but doesn't always vote during the midterms. You have to go reach out and tell people that they've got to exercise their franchise, they've got to be good citizens. They've got to take responsibility to make sure that more jobs are created in Wisconsin, more opportunities created for Wisconsin, that young people have a better educational in Wisconsin. All that will happen, but it depends on them voting, and you need to be out there motivating them. All right?

And if you do that, then on election day we are going to welcome in somebody who I think is going to be one of the best Governors in the country, Mary Burke.

Thank you, guys. Love you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:46 p.m. at North Division High School. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Gubernatorial Candidate Mary P. Burke in Milwaukee
October 28, 2014

The President. Hello, Milwaukee! Give it up for your next Governor, Mary Burke! Oh, it's good to be back in Wisconsin! It's good to be at North Division! Go Blue Devils! We've got a proud North Division alum, Congresswoman Gwen Moore, in the house. We've got your outstanding mayor, Tom Barrett; Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele; Wisconsin's next attorney general, Susan Happ. And all of you are here.

You know, I got off the plane, and I said it's—it just felt good being back in the Midwest. I was tired of all these 75-, 80-degree days. [*Laughter*] Aww, you've got to be tougher than that. [*Laughter*] Got to have a little nip in the air.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back.

So, 1 week, Wisconsin. One week. One week from today, you get to choose a new Governor. And because early voting runs through this Friday, you don't have to wait till election day. You can vote all week. I mean, you can only vote once. [*Laughter*] This isn't Chicago, now. [*Laughter*] You can only—I'm teasing, Chicago. I'm messing with you. That was a

long time ago. You can only vote once, but you can vote any time this week. So you've got to go visit burkeforwisconsin.com/vote. I'm going to repeat that: burkeforwisconsin.com/vote. And that way you can find your polling place. And then, you can grab your friends, you grab your coworkers, you grab the lazy cousin who's sitting at home, never votes during the midterm elections. He's watching reruns of old Packer games. [*Laughter*] Just grab him up. Take all of them to cast their ballot and cast their ballot for Mary Burke.

Let me tell you why. Now, I mean, part of it is you meet Mary, right away you just know this is an honest person. You get a sense, this is somebody who cares about people. You have an impression of somebody with integrity. But there's also some policy reasons and some political reasons why you need to vote.

This country has made real progress since the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes. When I came into office, the economy was in free fall. Auto industry was on the verge of collapse. But over the past 4½ years, America's businesses have created more than 10 million new jobs. Here's the only problem: Wisconsin lags the rest of the country when it comes to job growth. So the country as a whole is doing better; Wisconsin is not doing so good. Over the next week, you have a chance to change that. You have a chance to choose a Governor who doesn't put political ideology first, who's not thinking partisan first. She's going to put you first.

And she has a track record. She is a successful businesswoman, helped to grow Trek into a company that employs nearly a thousand Wisconsin workers. Then she was Secretary of Commerce; she helped reopen the mill in Park Falls. She brought companies to this State, helped small-business owners start their own businesses and grow their businesses and hire people right here in Wisconsin.

As the leader of the Dane County Boys and Girls Club, Mary is helping the next generation of Wisconsinites getting the fair shot they deserve. Some of you may have heard this story. A few years ago, Mary e-mailed the owners of a small jam and jelly maker in Madison just because she liked their jams and their jellies. And she offered to help them out. Today, their business has gone from 2 employees to 10 employees. She did that on her spare time. That's the kind of person Mary is, somebody who wants to help people help themselves, who wants to see people who are working hard succeed.

The point is, is that Mary Burke knows what it takes to create good, middle class jobs in Wisconsin. She's been doing it for decades. And that's what this election is all about. When you step into that voting booth, you've got a choice to make. And it's not just a choice between candidates or parties. It's a choice about two different visions for America. And it boils down to a simple question: Who's going to fight for you? Who's fighting for your future?

Audience members. Mary!

The President. Who's looking out for your kids?

Audience members. Mary!

The President. Who's going to make sure that there's strong job growth in Wisconsin?

Audience members. Mary!

The President. And let me say this: Republicans are patriots, they love their country just like we do. But they've got some bad ideas. That doesn't mean that we don't appreciate them as Americans. I've got family members who have got bad ideas—[*laughter*]—they're still part of the family, but you don't want to put them in charge, right?

Audience members. Right!

The President. So, like a broken record, they just keep on offering the same worn-out, tired theory of the economy that has already shown itself to undermine the middle class. You give more tax breaks to folks at the top. You start cutting investments in things like education. You kind of loosen up regulations and rules on big banks and credit card companies and polluters and insurers. You make the safety net a little thinner for folks who fall on hard times.

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

We've tried these things the last decade, and we know they won't work. We know they don't work. So——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Hold on a second. Young lady, let me tell you something. Let me tell you something. Hold on a second.

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. It's all right. It's all right.

The young lady is expressing her concern about immigration and the fact that we don't have a comprehensive immigration bill. The problem is, she should be protesting the Republicans who are blocking it in Congress. That's what she should be doing. That's what she should be doing. Because I'm for it. Because I'm for it. So—[*applause*].

But here's the point. The point is that Mary Burke and I have a different vision for what the future looks like. And it's a vision that's rooted in the conviction that in America, prosperity has never trickled down from the top. Prosperity grows from a rising, thriving middle class. Prosperity happens when you give more chances to people to work their way into the middle class.

Look, you know, Michelle and I, we didn't grow up with a lot. I wasn't grown—I wasn't raised in a fancy house. Michelle's dad was a blue-collar worker. Her mom was a secretary. The reason that we had opportunity was because there was a country that said, we're going to help you go to a good school, we're going to invest in making sure you can afford to go to college, we're going to make sure that we grow an economy not from the top down, but from the middle out. And that's true for most people in America. Most of us grow up in a situation where we've got to get a little help along the way. And as long as you work hard and carry out your responsibilities, then we've got to make sure that every child in America has got a chance.

And that's what Mary believes in: an economy that grows for the many and not just the few, an economy where everybody in Wisconsin has a shot. Mary is running because she believes working people—she believes that working people are the backbone of Wisconsin. She doesn't think working people are the problem, she thinks working people are the solution. She's not running to cut taxes for those at the top, she's running to build economies—Wisconsin's economy from the middle out. And here's the good thing: She understands that ideas to create jobs, they shouldn't be judged as to whether they're Democrat or Republican, but whether or not they work.

She's a businesswoman; she's a practical person. She knows what it's like to build a business. She understands that you don't want too much regulation. She understands that you don't want a government that doesn't work to help businesses grow, but you also need to have a government and a Governor who is going to help encourage new businesses and that young entrepreneur to maybe be able to start something on her own.

We believe that in this country education isn't just the key to economic growth, it's the surest path to the middle class. Mary is not running to make even deeper cuts in education here in Wisconsin, she wants to invest in our neighborhood schools and bring down the cost of higher education and make college a reality for all young people.

Audience members. Mary! Mary! Mary!

The President. We believe that access to affordable health care isn't a privilege, it's a right. Mary is not running to block hard-working Americans from getting health insurance just because you've got some ideological idea. She's running to do what 27 Governors, including 9 Republicans, have already done: expand access to Medicaid because it's good for the citizens, it makes sense for the State budget. You don't have free people going to the emergency room. They're getting preventive care, they're not getting sick in the first place. That's good for everybody.

In this country, access to health insurance shouldn't be a Republican or a Democratic issue, it's an American issue. It matters to everybody. I don't know why you'd run on a platform of making sure some folks don't have

health insurance. Why would you do that? I mean, that's a weird thing to want: "I'm going to make sure folks don't have health insurance in this State." That doesn't make any sense.

We believe that in America, nobody should work full time and ever have to raise their family in poverty. Mary Burke doesn't believe that the minimum wage "serves no purpose," as one Republican said. She knows the difference it can make to some hard-working mom who's working already and having to take care of her kids. And she's trying to make ends meet. That makes a difference to her.

She's not going to use the Governor's office to side with corporate interests that believe that the minimum wage is something to be cleared out. She's going to take the side of folks who are working hard every day, cleaning out bedpans and cleaning out office buildings and making other folks' beds and taking care of some of our seniors. She knows that they work hard just like everybody else. They shouldn't be raising their kids in poverty. She's running to give Wisconsin a raise. That's why you should vote for Mary Burke.

We believe that America is stronger when women are full and equal participants in the economy. In 2012, Republicans here in Wisconsin repealed a statewide fair pay law. Now think about that. Just like I don't understand why somebody would be against somebody having health insurance, I don't understand, why would you want to repeal a law to make sure women are treated fairly on the job? That's your platform? That's your agenda? Earlier this year—it don't make no sense. [*Laughter*]

Earlier this year, Republicans in Washington said no to a national fair pay law. One of the Republicans running for office in this State right now said, "You could argue that money is more important for men."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Women, do you agree with that?

Audience members. No!

The President. Mary Burke doesn't agree with that. We need to strengthen the middle class for the 21st century. That means we need leaders from the 21st century, who actually believe that women should get paid the same as men for doing the same work. Let's make sure they get paid fairly.

And while we're at it, let's make sure women can take time off to care for a loved one without losing their job. Let's make sure women control their own health care choices, not her boss, not her insurer, not some politician. Sometimes, it feels like these folks, they've been watching "Mad Men" too much. [*Laughter*] I mean, it's a good show, but I was, like, that was then, we do things differently now. And this is not just a women's issue, this is a family issue. I tell you, when Michelle was working, I wanted to make sure she was getting paid. [*Laughter*]

And by the way, I mean, I should point out, she is working really hard now as First Lady and doesn't get paid, but that's a whole other thing. [*Laughter*] But—because I didn't want her to think, like, what, I'm not working? [*Laughter*] Michelle works. I promise you. So—[*applause*].

But look, the bottom line is: When women succeed, America succeeds. Wisconsin, the biggest corporations don't need another champion. I mean, Mary Burke is a businesswoman. She recognizes the incredible role of free enterprise in building our economy, but she also knows that you need a champion. She knows that the wealthiest Americans, they're doing fine right now. They don't need another champion. You need a champion. Opportunity for the few isn't what Wisconsin is about; opportunity for all is what Wisconsin is about.

So that's why you have to vote. If you want something better, you've got to vote for it.

If you believe millionaires don't need more tax breaks, working families do, you've got to vote. If you believe we shouldn't be cutting our kids' future, but investing in our kids' future, you've got to vote. If you think we should make it easier, not harder, for young people to pay off their college loans, you've got to vote. If you believe that hard-working Americans deserve an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, what do you have to do? You've got to vote.

Four years ago, Democrats lost the Governor's race in Wisconsin by just 10 votes per

ward. Ten votes. Hmm-mmm. This young lady said, "Hmm-mmm." [*Laughter*] Ten votes. Ten votes could be the difference between an economy that works for everybody or an economy that just works for the few. Ten votes could decide whether nearly 600,000 Wisconsin workers are denied a raise or whether they get the raise they deserve. Ten votes could decide whether 10,000—tens of thousands of Wisconsin families remain without health insurance or whether they finally get a chance to go see a doctor. Your vote will decide the course that Wisconsin takes.

So don't let anybody tell you your vote doesn't matter. It's just not true. It is an excuse. Don't let anybody stand in your way. Unless you're registering on election day, you can vote even if you don't have photo ID. Don't let anybody mislead you. And don't just stop at voting. I am asking you to get involved. I need you to go to burkeforwisconsin.com and volunteer. I'm going to repeat that: burkeforwisconsin.com. Volunteer in this last week. Make some phone calls for Mary. Knock on some doors for Mary. Grab everybody you know, get them to go out and vote for Mary.

And look, one of the biggest challenges that we have in this country—you don't read about it in the newspapers all the time—is just that folks feel cynical about their ability to affect things. But the problem is, we give away our power all the time. We sit at home, and we complain, and we say this isn't how things should be. And we say, you know what, working folks aren't getting a fair shot. And we say that people are ignoring our concerns, and they're not helping when it comes to doing something about student loans. And why is everything so expensive? And how come workers aren't getting the kind of protections they need? But the thing is, if you just sit home and complain, then of course, nothing is going to change.

I can't change it on your—I can't change it on my own. No, no. Gwen Moore can't change things on her own. And once Mary is Governor, you're still going to have to get involved. You have power when you work together. And listen, Wisconsin, the hardest thing to change in politics is the status quo. Because everybody kind of thinks, well, that's just the way it is. It's even harder when it seems like folks in power care more about keeping power than they do about you. And so just understand, the folks on the other side, they're counting on you being cynical. They're figuring, you won't think you can make a difference. They figure, you won't organize. They figure, you won't vote. You will just go along with the status quo.

Audience members. No!

The President. You'll just go along the way so often we go along with situations that aren't working.

Audience members. No!

The President. Don't buy it. Don't be cynical. Be hopeful. Because America is making progress. Despite unyielding opposition, there are workers who have jobs now that didn't have it before. There are families who have health insurance who didn't have it before. There are students going to college who didn't have it before. There are troops coming home from Afghanistan and being with their families.

Cynicism didn't put anybody on the Moon. Cynicism has never ended a war. It has never cured a disease. It did not build a business. It did not feed a young mind. Cynicism is a choice. And hope is a better choice.

Hope is what gives young soldiers the courage to storm a beach. Hope is what gives young people the strength to march for women's rights and civil rights and voting rights and gay rights and immigrants' rights. Hope is the belief that there are better days, that we can build up a middle class and give back something to our communities and hand down something better for our kids.

Hope is what built America. Not cynicism. And I am telling you, Wisconsin, America's best days are still ahead. I believe it. Mary Burke believes it. Now you have to believe it. Go out there and vote. And go vote for Mary Burke.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:08 p.m. at North Division High School. In his remarks, he referred to Susan V. Happ, district attorney,

Jefferson County, WI; and Gov. Scott K. Walker and State Sen. Glenn Grothman of Wisconsin. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Remarks on the United States Response to the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa

October 29, 2014

Thank you. Good afternoon, everybody. And thank you, Dr. Brantly, not just for the introduction, but for your extraordinary work to help save lives in Africa and here at home.

As many of you know, I welcomed Kent and his wonderful wife Amber to the White House last month. And I was so moved by their deep faith, a faith that grounds their unwavering commitment to service, that I thought it would be a good idea to have them back. He's gained a little weight since I last saw him. [*Laughter*] So, Amber, you've been making sure he's eating properly. But Keith [Kent]* and Amber, you're an inspiration to me and to people around the world. And on behalf of all of us, thank you so much. Thank you.

As I said yesterday, we know that the best way to protect Americans from Ebola is to stop the outbreak at its source. And we're honored to be joined today by some of the extraordinary American health workers who are on the front lines of the fight in West Africa. We just had an opportunity to meet, to talk, for me to hear about their service in truly challenging conditions.

And some of these men and women have recently returned; others are heading there shortly. But all of them have signed up to leave their homes and their loved ones to head straight into the heart of the Ebola epidemic. Like our military men and women deploying to West Africa, they do this for no other reason than their own sense of duty, their sense of purpose, their sense of serving a cause greater than themselves. And we need to call them what they are, which is American heroes. They deserve our gratitude, and they deserve to be treated with dignity and with respect.

Now, over the past few weeks, I've met and spoken with doctors and nurses who have treated Ebola patients. That includes some who've been diagnosed with and beaten Ebola themselves, like Kent, and like nurse Nina Pham, who I was proud to welcome to the Oval Office.

And I want to say to all the doctors and nurses out there what I've told the doctors and nurses here today: Each of you studied medicine because you wanted to save lives, and the world needs you more than ever. The medical professionals and public health workers serving in Africa are a shining example of what America means to the world, of what is possible when America leads.

I said this at the U.N. General Assembly: When disease or disaster strikes anywhere in the world, the world calls us. And the reason they call us is because of the men and women like the ones who are here today. They respond with skill and professionalism and courage and dedication. And it's because of the determination and skill and dedication and patriotism of folks like this that I'm confident we will contain and ultimately snuff out this outbreak of Ebola, because that's what we do.

A lot of people talk about American exceptionalism. I'm a firm believer in American exceptionalism. You know why I am? It's because of folks like this. It's because we don't run and hide when there's a problem. It's because we don't react to our fears, but instead, we respond with common sense and skill and courage. That's the best of our history, not fear, not hysteria, not misinformation. We react clearly and firmly, even when others are losing their heads. That's part of the reason why we're effective. That's part of the reason why people

* White House correction.

look to us. And because of the work that's being done by folks like this and by folks who are right now, as we speak, in the three affected countries, we're already seeing a difference.

I just had a chance to be in the Situation Room. Samantha Power, our U.N. Ambassador, has been traveling through the countries and talking to professionals and seeing what's on the ground. And she was describing how, because of our military, we're already setting up Ebola treatment units ahead of schedule. We're already setting up supply lines. And she described how a Chinese airplane was landing in facilities that we had helped organize, and Liberian and Chinese and American folks are pulling supplies off and deploying it. Because we had set up the infrastructure and gotten there early, the world is now starting to respond.

Some of the labs that we've set up are cutting the test to see whether somebody is positive for Ebola from what was as long as 7 days now to less than a day, which means people know sooner whether they have it. They're able to get isolated quicker. They're less likely to spread it. If they don't have it, they can be with their families faster, which means there's less fear and anxiety.

Safe burial practices have doubled in Monrovia, and we know that the way folks were treating the deceased was a major contributor to spreading the disease. Because of the leadership that we've shown on the ground, the mood in Liberia has changed. People have a greater sense of confidence that this can be dealt with, and suddenly, you're seeing Liberian nationals who are increasingly willing to work as part of the public health teams.

So we're having not just effect by what we do directly, but also by a change in mindset in the countries affected and around the globe. That's what's happening because of American leadership, and it is not abstract. It is people who are willing to go there at significant sacrifice to make a difference. That's American exceptionalism. That's what we should be proud of. That's who we are.

Now, none of this means that the problem has been solved. I don't want anybody to lose a sense of urgency. In those countries that are affected, this is still a severe, significant outbreak, and it is going to take some time for these countries to battle back. We've got a long way to go.

But I do want Americans to understand why this is so important. This is not just charity, although Kent's faith is driving him to do that, and I'd like to think that that sense of faith and grace motivates all of us. But this is also practical; it has to do with our own self-interest. If we are not dealing with this problem there, it will come here. Now, we have a responsibility to look out for our health workers as well as they look out for us. And that's why on Monday, the CDC announced new monitoring and movement guidelines that are sensible, that are based on science, that were crafted in consultation with the people who are actually going there to do the work. And they're tailored to the unique circumstances of each health care worker.

But we have to keep in mind that if we're discouraging our health care workers, who are prepared to make these sacrifices, from traveling to these places in need, then we're not doing our job in terms of looking after our own public health and safety. What we are—what we need right now is these shock troops who are out there leading globally. We can't discourage that, we've got to encourage it and applaud it.

And I want America to understand: The truth is that until we stop this outbreak in West Africa, we may continue to see individual cases in America in the weeks and months ahead because that's the nature of today's world. We can't hermetically seal ourselves off. The nature of international travel and movement means that the only way to assure that we are safe is to make sure that we have dealt with the disease where right now it is most acute.

So yes, we are likely to see a possible case elsewhere outside of these countries. And that's true whether or not you adopt a travel ban, whether or not you adopt a quarantine. It's the nature of diseases. As long as Ebola exists in the world, no one can promise that there won't be any more cases in America or any

place else. To prevent its spread and ultimately to keep Americans safe, we have to go to the source while preparing for the few cases that we see here and protecting our health care workers who are treating patients both here at home and abroad.

Now, the good news is that our medical system is better prepared for any additional cases, and we'll continue to work with hospitals and State and local public health agencies to improve that preparedness every single day. And although coordinating all that, nationally as well as internationally, is a process and there are constant tweaks and modifications as lessons are learned, it's all based on 40 years of experience in dealing with this disease. It's not all new, and it will get done.

So I guess my biggest message—and I'm pretty sure this is a message that all the folks behind me, including the ones with the white coats, would confirm—is that it's critical that we remain focused on the facts and on the science. Keep in mind that of the seven Americans treated for Ebola so far, most of them while serving in West Africa, all seven have survived. Right now the only American still undergoing treatment is Dr. Craig Spencer, who contracted the disease abroad while working to protect others. And we salute his service, and we're getting him the best care as well.

But we know how to treat this disease. And now that the West African nations of Senegal and Nigeria have been declared Ebola-free, we know that this disease can be contained and defeated if we stay vigilant and committed and America continues to lead the fight. We've got hundreds of Americans from across the country—nurses, doctors, public health workers, soldiers, engineers, mechanics—who are putting themselves on the front lines of this fight. They represent citizenship and patriotism and public service at its best. They make huge sacrifices to protect this country that we love. And when they come home, they deserve to be treated properly. They deserve to be treated like the heroes that they are.

They're Americans like Dr. Dan Chertow, who's here today. Dan is an officer in the U.S. Public Health Service who took a leave from his position at the National Institutes of Health to volunteer with Doctors Without Borders in Liberia, where he cared for over 200 Ebola patients. Dan, thank you. I'm very proud of you. Dan's right here.

They're Americans like Katie Curran. Her father James was the head of the CDC Task Force on HIV/AIDS when that disease first emerged. So she studied to become a public health expert in her own right. She decided to chart her own course, most recently, in a canoe. [*Laughter*] We recently read about how she and her CDC "disease detective" team traveled to a village in Sierra Leone that was so remote, they had to take canoes to reach it. And when they arrived, the chief who met them wore a Pittsburgh Steelers cap. [*Laughter*] So today Katie has completed her mission. She's on her way home. And I can promise you that, thanks to Katie and her team, America's mark on that village, our legacy for future generations there, will go far beyond sports teams.

We're talking about Americans like Captain Calvin Edwards. Father of four, works at the FDA in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. But like Dr. Dan Chertow, he's also an officer in the U.S. Public Health Service. We read about how on his 29th wedding anniversary, carrying a pillow from home and a copy of the New Testament he takes on deployments, he left for training to oversee a team in Liberia, not before he—but before he did, he made sure to buy his wife a dozen roses. [*Laughter*] And as he boarded the plane to Monrovia, Captain Edwards reminded his team of their oath to defend our country, and they responded with a rousing rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner." And they're all there right now, making us proud.

Of the 69 Public Health Service officers like Dr. Chertow and Captain Edwards who were chosen for this mission, not a single one declined. Not one. They all stepped forward.

I know that with all the headlines and all the news, that people are scared. I know that Ebola has concerned them. But the reason I'm so proud of this country is because when there are times where we need to step up and do the right thing, we do the right thing. That's who we are. That's what we do.

No other nation is doing as much to help in West Africa as the United States of America. When I hear people talking about American leadership and then are promoting policies that would avoid leadership and have us running in the opposite direction and hiding under the covers, it makes me a little frustrated.

We're at our best when we are standing up and taking responsibility, even when it requires us making sacrifices, especially when it requires us making sacrifices. And it's how we help others around the world that's important. And it's not just massive deployments of troops and equipment, as proud as we are of that, but it's also our skill and our compassion and painstaking effort and our ability to learn from mistakes that are made and our ability to work through problems that are really complicated and to see something through and not lose our heads, to have grace under pressure and apply ourselves with slow, steady effort, the kind that change and progress requires.

That's what I want to see from us: the pride of a nation that always steps up and gets the job done. America has never been defined by fear. We are defined by courage and passion and hope and selflessness and sacrifice and a willingness to take on challenges when others can't and others will not, and ordinary Americans who risk their own safety to help those in need, and who inspire, thereby, the example of others, all in the constant pursuit of building a better world not just for ourselves, but for people in every corner of the Earth.

And that's how I know we're going to manage to contain the disease in America, because like—the heroes like the ones who are here today. That's how I know we will fight this disease's spread, as more nurses and doctors and medics and lab technicians and health professionals join the effort. That's how I know that ultimately we'll end the outbreak in West Africa and we'll eliminate the threat that it poses to the world. That's how I know that we will not only save thousands, tens of thousands, potentially hundreds of thousands of lives, but also how I know that we will remain true to our ideals and our values.

So I put those on notice who think that we should hide from these problems. That's not who we are. That's not who I am. That's not who these folks are. This is America. We do things differently.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:44 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Kent P. Brantly, former medical director, Samaritan's Purse Ebola Case Management Center in Monrovia, Liberia; Nina Pham, a nurse at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX, who was infected with the Ebola virus while providing care to Thomas E. Duncan, who died on October 8; U.S. Ebola patients Nancy Writebol, Ashoka Mukpo, and Richard A. Sacra, who were infected with the Ebola virus in West Africa and treated successfully in the U.S.; and Amber Vinson, a second nurse infected with Ebola at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX, who was treated successfully.

Statement on the Death of President Michael Chilufya Sata of Zambia
October 29, 2014

On behalf of the American people, Michelle and I send our condolences to First Lady Dr. Christine Kaseba-Sata and family, as well as the people of Zambia, for the loss of President Michael Chilufya Sata. The United States remains committed to our enduring friendship and partnership with Zambia and strongly supports a peaceful constitutional transition of power as the country moves forward during this time of sorrow. We will continue to seek opportunities to enhance our bilateral relations, support Zambia's democratic traditions, increase its development, and bolster its commitment to a free and just society.

Statement on the Death of Thomas M. Menino
October 30, 2014

Michelle and I were saddened to hear of the passing of Tom Menino. Bold, big-hearted, and Boston strong, Tom was the embodiment of the city he loved and led for more than two decades. As Boston's longest serving mayor, Tom helped make his hometown the vibrant, welcoming, world-class place it is today. His legacy lives on in every neighborhood he helped revitalize, every school he helped turn around, and every community he helped make a safer, better place to live. I had a chance to speak with Tom's wife Angela yesterday, and today our thoughts and prayers are with her, with the entire Menino family, and with the people of Boston who Tom loved so much and who loved him in return.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Gubernatorial Candidate Michael H. Michaud in Portland, Maine
October 30, 2014

The President. Hello, Portland! Hello, Maine! Oh, it is good to be back in Maine.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you too! And I love the State of Maine. I mean, you guys just have a pretty State. It is just spectacular. And I appreciate whoever arranged for it to be in the fifties today. [*Laughter*]

Please give it up for your next Governor, Mike Michaud! "I like Mike!" "We like Mike!" We like Mike!

Audience members. We like Mike! We like Mike! We like Mike!

The President. We like Mike! We like Mike! We like Mike!

Audience members. We like Mike! We like Mike! We like Mike!

The President. And I want to thank a legendary son of Maine, Senator George Mitchell, for being here tonight. We've got your former Governor, John Baldacci is here. Your Congresswoman, Chellie Pingree is here. We've got your mayor, Mike Brennan is here.

And while he can't be here tonight, I want to say a few words about Senator Angus King. Angus is proudly independent. He's not focused on what's best for a political party, he's focused on what's best for the people of Maine. He's a gentleman and brings civility down to Washington. And I agree with what he said yesterday: that it's time to come together around Mike Michaud as our choice to lead Maine forward.

But that depends on what happens in the next 5 days. Five days. Five days from now, you get to choose a new Governor. So you're going to have to grab your friends. You've got to grab your classmates, your coworkers. You've got to knock on some doors. You've got to make some phone calls. You have to visit mainedems.org and find your polling place. You've got to take everyone you know to cast a ballot for Mike Michaud.

And let me tell you why. George Mitchell talked about this. Mike talked about it. I'm proud to be a Democrat in part because of the traditions we represent. And one of those traditions is the idea that everybody who works hard and takes responsibility in this country should be able to make it.

And this country has made real progress since the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes. Over the last—over the past 4½ years, in part because of some really good work by people like Mike, who didn't forget where they came from and understood what it means to work hard—over the last 4½ years, American businesses have created more than 10 million new jobs. This morning we learned that our economy grew at a strong clip over the summer, even stronger than we'd expected. In fact, over the past 6 months, our economy has grown at the fastest pace in more than 10

years. So the truth is, America is outpacing most of the rest of the world. We've created more jobs here in the United States over the last 6 years than Japan, Europe, and all of the advanced nations combined. We've made real progress.

But what's also true is, is that the gains of a growing economy haven't been fully felt by everybody. You know all too well that Maine lags behind the rest of New England when it comes to job growth. Over the next week, you've got a chance to change that. You have a chance to choose a Governor who doesn't put political ideology first. You have a chance to choose a Governor that puts you first. And that's why it's so important for you to vote.

Mike learned the meaning of hard work by following in his dad's footsteps and his granddad's footsteps and punching a clock every day at the Great Northern Paper mill. And when sludge from that mill started to leak into the Penobscot River, Mike decided somebody had to stand up for families like his. So he ran for the State legislature, not because he wanted to be somebody, but because he wanted to do something, because he wanted to fight for somebody. He didn't care about fancy titles. He wanted to deliver for his neighbors and his friends and his family. And he helped clean up that river. And Mike has been fighting ever since for ordinary Mainers: That's who he is.

As your State senate president, Mike brought Democrats and Republicans together, balanced Maine's budget, gave workers who were struggling a hike in the minimum wage. In Congress, he worked across the aisle to pass a VA reform bill earlier this year, fought to make sure Maine's rural veterans get the health care that they've earned.

He's fought for job-creating investments throughout this State. He's helped make sure military families—our soldiers are equipped with American-made athletic footwear, like the kind the folks turn out at New Balance right here in Maine. He's fought for the investments in the kind of clean energy from the wind and the sea that's already creating good middle class jobs for Mainers. And if he had been Governor over the last 4 years, there'd have been $120 million of extra investment right here in Maine on clean energy. Apparently, your current Governor doesn't really believe that windmills work—[*laughter*]—which I thought was pretty interesting. I hadn't heard that one.

So that's why I like Mike. He wakes up every day fighting to make sure Mainers see their hard work pay off, making sure that responsibility is rewarded. He fights to make sure every kid, every worker across this State gets the same chance that he had—in fact, an even better chance—because he believes, like I believe, that America is a place where no matter what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is, who you love, you can make it if you try. That's the essence of what America is about.

And that's what this election is all about. When you step into the voting booth, you make a choice, and it's not just a choice between candidates or parties. It's a choice about your vision for America. It boils down to the simple question: Who's on your side?

Audience member. You!

The President. Who's expressing the values you care about? Who's going to fight for your future?

Audience members. Mike!

The President. This is a smart crowd. [*Laughter*]

Look, Republicans are patriots. They love this country. They love their families. There are all kinds of good people in the Republican Party. But they've got some bad ideas, which is okay. [*Laughter*] I mean, there are a lot of people I love. I've got a bunch of folks in my family who have got bad ideas. I love them—[*laughter*]—but I don't want them in charge of stuff.

So—and what's happened is, like a broken record, they just keep on offering the same tired theories of the economy that we know haven't worked—in fact, that have undermined the middle class. More tax breaks for those at the top, fewer investments in things like education, looser rules for polluters and credit card companies, a thinner safety net for folks who fall on hard times. We've tried those things. We tried those things before I got into office, and you saw how it turned out.

We know those ideas don't work. So Mike has got a different vision for what the future looks like, and I think most of you do too. And it's a vision rooted in our conviction that in America prosperity doesn't trickle down from the top. Prosperity grows from a rising, thriving middle class, from—[*applause*]. It happens because we build ladders for people to get into the middle class.

We think the economy grows best when it works for the many, not for the few. And that's what Mike believes. He believes it because that's his experience, that's his life. That's what he knows. He's seen it. He's not running to cut taxes for folks who don't need it, he's running to build the Maine economy from the middle class out. He knows that ideas should be judged not by whether they're Democrat or Republican, but whether they work.

And here's what we know works. We know that in this country, education is not just the key to economic growth, it's the best path into the middle class. So Mike is not running to tell parents that if you can't afford private schools, tough luck. I mean, think about that, Maine. He's running to invest in our public schools, bring down the cost of higher education, make college a reality for more people. That's what Mike believes.

Mike believes in access to affordable health care, that it's not a privilege, it's a right. So Mike is not running to block hard-working Americans from getting health insurance just because it doesn't fit your ideology. He's running to do what nine Republican Governors have already done. He's running to do what Democrats and Republicans here in Maine have already voted to do five separate times: expand access to Medicaid because it's good for our people. It makes sense for State budgets. That's not a red or blue issue, that's an American issue. Why wouldn't we want to make sure everybody has the chance to get decent health care?

Sometimes, issues are complicated, and then sometimes, issues are simple. And let me tell you, if your choice is between somebody whose platform is "don't let people get health care" and "let's make sure people have health care and aren't going to emergency rooms, and it won't cost the State money because the Federal Government is helping," why wouldn't you want to do that? [*Laughter*] Why wouldn't you want to do that? Why wouldn't you want people to be healthier?

Mike believes that in America, nobody who works full time should have to raise their families in poverty. Which is why Mike Michaud would never veto a buck-fifty-an-hour raise for Maine's lowest income workers. He knows that can be the difference between a hard-working mom or dad being able to pay the bills and keep a roof over the heads of their kids. Mike wouldn't use the Governor's office to side with corporate interests at the expense of working families. Mike is running to give Maine a raise, because he understands that if somebody who right now is making $14,000 a year working full time starts making $15,000 or $16,000, they're going to spend that money. And if they spend that money, then the businesses have more customers. And if businesses have more customers, then they make more profit. And if they make more profit, they hire more workers, and everybody benefits. And it's the right thing to do. And that's how America grows: when everybody who's working hard has a chance.

Mike Michaud believes America is stronger when women are full and equal participants in our economy. Earlier this year, Republicans in Washington said no to a national fair pay law.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. [*Laughter*] One of—yes, this is a solvable problem.

One of the Republicans running for national office—running right now, he's running right now, I'm quoting here—he said, "You could argue that money is more important to men." [*Laughter*] That's what he said. I'm not kidding. Now, women, let me just ask you, was he speaking for you? Do you agree with that?

Audience members. No!

The President. Look, if we're going to strengthen the middle class for the 21st century, then we need leaders from the 21st century who believe that women care just as much

about what they get paid as men care. We want women paid fairly. It's common sense.

Women are more and more not just contributors to the family budget, oftentimes, they may be the primary breadwinner. So this isn't just a woman's issue. This is a family issue; this is an American issue. Let's make sure women are treated fairly on the job. And while we're at it, let's make sure women control their own health care choices, not politicians, not insurers, not their bosses.

This is—like I said, some things are complicated, some things are not. Treating women fairly, that shouldn't be complicated. You know, "Mad Men" is a good show. I like it. But that's not what we need in Augusta or in Washington. When women succeed, America succeeds. And Mike is going to make sure that women succeed here in Maine.

Who is going to fight for you?

Audience members. Mike!

The President. The biggest corporations, they don't need another champion. They've already got a lot of lobbyists working for them. You need a champion. The folks who are doing really, really well, at the top of the economic pyramid, they don't need a champion. You do. Opportunity for a few, that's not what Maine is about, opportunity for all is what Maine is about. And those of you who've seen Mike, who know Mike, who've met him, you know what's in his heart. You know who he cares about. And that's why you have to vote.

If you want something better, you've got to vote for it. If you believe working families deserve a tax break, not millionaires, you've got to vote. If you want to invest in kids' schools, not ignore those schools, you've got to vote. If you think we should make it easier for young people to go to college, you've got to vote. If you think you deserve an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, you've got to vote.

Four years ago, Republicans won the Governor's race in Maine by less than 18 votes per precinct. Eighteen votes. Those 18 votes could be the difference between an economy that works for everybody or just for some. Those 18 votes, that could decide whether 135,000 Maine workers get the raise they deserve. Those 18 votes could decide whether tens of thousands of Mainers are locked out of health insurance or they finally get the kind of coverage that allows them to take their kid to see a doctor. That's up to you.

So your vote will decide the course that Maine takes. That's why it's time for you to come together around one choice, one candidate, who you know will fight for you. And that candidate is Mike Michaud.

And let me just say this—[*applause*]—let me say this: If you've come to this rally, you're probably going to vote.

Audience members. Right!

The President. I mean, you might have wandered in here thinking there was a basketball game going on. [*Laughter*] And if so, I want you to vote. But most of you who are here—most of you are here because you understand what's at stake, which is why you can't just stop at voting. You've got to get involved. I'm asking you to go talk to your neighbors and your friends and talk to one of the organizers in this room, or go to mainedems.org. Volunteer, make some phone calls for Mike, knock on some doors for Mike. Grab everybody you know, get them to vote for Mike. This election is too important to stay at home. Don't let somebody else choose your future for you.

I'm not on the ballot this time, and this is, sort of, the last election cycle in which I'm involved as President. And I know the hardest—look, it makes you a little wistful. You kind of—[*laughter*]—because I do like campaigning. It's fun. And I know as I reflect back on the thing that I love so much about campaigning is that it reminds me about the American people, because you get to meet everybody, from all walks of life. You get to meet young moms who are just valiantly working on behalf of making sure their kids have a better life. You get to meet business owners who take pride in making something here in America and providing their workers a decent wage and showing what's possible for some young worker who comes in and can move up the ranks. You have a chance to meet veterans who just render extraordinary service to our country and then come back and suddenly are critical parts of

their community and giving back as first responders or as Little League coaches.

You just meet people from all walks of life, and it makes you so optimistic about the American people: how decent they are, how good they are, how hard-working they are, how resilient they are. And sometimes, it seems as if our political process doesn't reflect that. And it's not what we see on television; it's not what we read in the newspapers. And that's part of what makes it so hard to change the status quo.

So often, the people in power seem to be more concerned about getting more power than making sure that they're doing right by the people who sent them. And when you get discouraged—they're counting on you getting discouraged and cynical—they want you to think you're not going to make a difference so you don't get involved and you won't organize, you won't vote. And everybody gets caught up in this sense of sort of helplessness. Even when there are good decisions to be made right there that would make a difference in people's lives, nobody actually thinks they can happen.

And I'm here to tell you, don't buy into that cynicism, because despite what the cynics say, America is making progress. It's always making progress. That's what the American people do. They're strivers and dreamers, and they care about one another. We care about each other.

And despite unyielding opposition over these last 6 years, there are workers with jobs who didn't have them before. There are families with health insurance who didn't have them before. There are students going to college who couldn't afford to attend it before. There are troops who have come home from Iraq and Afghanistan and are now with their families.

Cynicism didn't make that happen. Cynicism didn't put a man on the Moon. Cynicism has never ended a war or cured disease or built a business or taught a young mind. Cynicism is a choice that you make. And it's being fed to you all the time. Don't accept it.

Hope is a better choice. Hope is what gives those soldiers in World War II the courage to storm a beach. Hope is what allows young people to march on behalf of women's rights and worker's rights and civil rights and voting rights and gay rights and immigration rights.

Hope in the better days that are ahead if we are working together: That's what Mike Michaud stands for; that's what this election is about. Hope's what built America. Show that you still have hope, and go out there and vote on November 4.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:22 p.m. at the Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Sen. George J. Mitchell; Gov. Paul R. LePage of Maine; and State Sen. Glenn Grothman of Wisconsin.

Remarks at Rhode Island College in Providence, Rhode Island
October 31, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! Well, can everybody please give Lisbeth a big round of applause? That was a great introduction.

Happy Halloween, everybody. I see a lot of you came as college students. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. We love you, Obama! We love you!

The President. I love you too. Those of you who have seats, feel free to sit down. Those of you who don't, don't. [*Laughter*] I am not going to be too long. I've got to get back and trick-or-treat tonight with Michelle. Although, Malia and Sasha are a little old and——

Audience members. Aww!

The President. It's so sad. [*Laughter*] I used to be able to—I mean, we'd dress them up, and we still have the pictures. They'll resent them later, but at the time, they were fine with it. They were so cute.

A good thing about being President is, we never run out of Presidential M&Ms—[*laughter*]—and so we're going to be giving those out.

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. [*Laughter*] You want some? Is that what you said? Only to kids. [*Laughter*]

We're so proud of Lisbeth, not just for the wonderful introduction, but for being so determined about her education. And she's a really remarkable young lady. I had a chance to speak to her before we came out. It turns out she went to school with my niece and nephew.

Audience member. Classical!

The President. That's right. At Classical, is that right? So that was neat.

I have also brought some Halloween characters with me: Our Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez. They are all dressed up as really outstanding public servants. [*Laughter*] And Tom has just been doing extraordinary work. His lovely daughter is here, who's a freshman at Brown. Your great Senators, Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse. Your outstanding Congressmen, David Cicilline, is here; Jim Langevin is here. And we're proud of both of them.

But despite how much I love all the folks I just mentioned, the people I really came to see is you. Because every decision I make, every single day, all the policies I pursue as President, are all aimed at making sure we restore the promise of this country for your generation and for every generation that comes after.

Now, the good news is we've made a lot of progress since the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes. So, when I first came into office, the economy was in a freefall, the auto industry was in a freefall. Banks were frozen up. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month. Over the past 55 months, our businesses have now added 10.3 million new jobs. For the first time in more than 6 years, the unemployment rate is below 6 percent. Over the past 6 months, our economy has grown at its fastest pace in more than 10 years.

And in education, dropout rates are down, the national graduation rate is the highest on record, more young people are earning their college degrees than ever before. Good job, young people.

In energy, we're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in nearly three decades. Manufacturing—the quintessential producer of middle class jobs, the heart of Rhode Island's economy for decades—manufacturing has now created 700,000 new jobs since early 2010. Ten million Americans have gained the peace of mind that comes with having health insurance. Deficit——

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. You're welcome. [*Laughter*]

Deficits have come down. Health care inflation has come down. There's almost no economic measure by which we haven't made substantial progress over this period of time. We're better off than we were.

So look, the progress has been hard. It's sometimes been challenging in particular States. But it's been steady and it's been real. Now, the thing is, though, what's also true is that millions of Americans don't yet feel the benefits of a growing economy where it matters most, and that's in their own lives. There are still a lot of folks who are working hard, but having trouble making ends meet.

I know that many of you are working while you go to school. Some of you are helping support your parents or siblings. Here in Rhode Island and across the country, there are still too many people who are working too many hours and don't have enough to show for it. And this isn't just the hangover from the great recession; some of this has to do with trends that date back 20, 30 years. And I've always said that recovering from the crisis of 2008 was the first thing we had to do, but our economy won't be really healthy until we reverse some of these longer term trends, this erosion of middle class jobs and income.

And here in Rhode Island, my administration recently announced a grant to help more long-term unemployed folks get the training and mentoring they need to get back to work. And all across the country, we're taking similar actions, community by community, to keep making progress.

We've got to harness the momentum that we're seeing in the broader economy and make sure the economy is working for every single American. We've got to keep making smart choices. And today, here at RIC, I want to focus on some commonsense steps we can take to help working families right now. In particular, I want to zero in on the choices we need to

make to ensure that women are full and equal participants in the economy.

Now, men, I don't want you to feel neglected. I like men just fine. [*Laughter*] But part of the reason that I want this focus is because I was raised by a single mom and know what it was like for her to raise two kids and go to work at the same time and try to piece things together without a lot of support. And my grandmother, who never graduated from college, but worked her way up to become vice president of a bank, I know what it was like for her to hit the glass ceiling and to see herself passed over for promotions by people that she had trained. And so some of this is personal, but some of it is also what we know about our economy, which is, it's changing in profound ways and in many ways for the better because of the participation of women more fully in our economy.

So earlier today I met with a group of women business owners and working moms and Lisbeth and your president here, and they were sharing stories that probably sound familiar to a lot of people: studying for finals after working a full shift, searching for childcare when the babysitter cancels at the last minute, using every penny of their savings so they can afford to stay home with their new baby.

And so I kept on hearing my own story. I kept on hearing about my mom struggling to put herself through school or my grandmother hitting that glass ceiling. And I thought about Michelle, and I told some stories about when Michelle and I were younger and getting started, and we were struggling to balance two careers while raising a family. And my job forced me to travel a lot, which made it harder on Michelle, and we would feel some of the guilt that so many people feel. We're working, we're thinking about the kids, we're wondering whether we're bad parents, we're wondering whether we were doing what we need to do on the job. That's the catch-22 of working parents: We wanted to spend time with our kids, but we also wanted to make sure that we gave them the opportunities that our hard work was providing.

And then, of course, I think about my daughters. And the idea that my daughters wouldn't have the same opportunities as somebody's sons, well, that's unacceptable. [*Applause*] That's not acceptable.

So I say all this because, to the men here, we all have a stake in choosing policies that help women succeed. Women make up about half of America's workforce. For more than two decades, women have earned over half of the higher education degrees awarded in this country. And you look at RIC's student body, almost 70 percent women. In colleges nationwide, there are more women graduating than men, which means that for the first time, America's highly educated workforce will be made up of more women than men.

But here's the challenge—that's all good news—the challenge is, our economy and some of the laws and rules governing our workplaces haven't caught up with that reality. A lot of workplaces haven't caught up with that reality. So while many women are working hard to support themselves and their families, they're still facing unfair choices, outdated workplace policies. That holds them back, but it also holds all of us back. We have to do better, because women deserve better. And by the way, when women do well, everybody does well.

So women deserve a day off to care for a sick child or sick parent without running into hardship. And Rhode Island's got the right idea. You're one of just three States where paid family leave is the law of the land. More States should choose to follow your lead.

It was interesting talking to some of the small-business owners in the meeting. They were saying how the Rhode Island law actually helped them do a better job recruiting and retaining outstanding employees. And so that shows you something: that this is not just a nice thing to do; it's good policy. It's good for business. It's good for the economy.

Without paid leave, when a baby arrives or an aging parent needs help, workers have to make painful decisions about whether they can afford to be there when their families need them most. Many women can't even get a paid day off to give birth to their child. I mean,

there are a lot of companies that still don't provide maternity leave. Of course, dads should be there too. So let's make this happen for women and for men and make our economy stronger. We've got to broaden our laws for family leave.

Moms and dads deserve a great place to drop their kids off every day that doesn't cost them an arm and a leg. We need better childcare, daycare, early childhood education policies. In many States, sending your child to daycare costs more than sending them to a public university.

Audience member. True!

The President. True? [*Laughter*] And too often, parents have no choice but to put their kids in cheaper daycare that maybe doesn't have the kinds of programming that makes a big difference in a child's development. But—and sometimes, there may just not be any slots, or the best programs may be too far away. And sometimes, someone, usually mom, leaves the workplace to stay home with the kids, which then leaves her earning a lower wage for the rest of her life as a result. And that's not a choice we want Americans to make.

So let's make this happen. By the end of this decade, let's enroll 6 million children in high-quality preschool, and let's make sure that we are making America stronger. That is good for families; it's also good for the children, because we know investing in high-quality early childhood education makes all the difference in the world, and those kids will do better. So we need family leave, we need better childcare policies, and we need to make sure that women get an honest day's pay for an honest day's work.

About 28 million Americans would benefit if we raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour, like Sheldon Whitehouse and Jack Reed support. And let me say this: Minimum wage—those aren't just teenage jobs that are impacted. We're not just talking about young people. I mean, my first job was at Baskin-Robbins. And I got paid the minimum wage, and it was okay. Wearing that hat and the apron was—[*laughter*]—yes.

But that—the truth is, the average worker who would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage is 35 years old—35. A majority of low-wage workers are women. A lot of them have kids. Right now somebody working full time on the minimum wage makes $14,500 a year—$14,500. If they're a parent, that means they're below the poverty line. Nobody who works full time in America should be below the poverty line. They should not be raising their kids below the poverty line. I am not going to give up this fight. And we need Republicans in Congress to stop blocking a minimum wage increase and give America a raise.

And if a woman is doing the same work as a man, she deserves to pay—get paid just like the man does. Even though it's 2014, there are women still earning less than men for doing the same work. And women of color face an even greater wage gap. And at a time when women are the primary breadwinners in more households than ever, that hurts the whole family if they're not getting paid fairly. Again, men, I just want you to pay attention. When Michelle and I were starting off, there were stretches of time where Michelle was making more money than me, and I wanted to make sure she was making every dime that she deserved. [*Laughter*] Right? I don't know how I benefit by her getting paid less than a man. Right?

Audience members. Right!

The President. Okay! Men, I just want you to be clear. [*Laughter*]

And it starts with recent college graduates. Women often start their careers with lower pay, and then the gap grows over time, especially if they get passed over for promotions and then they get fewer raises, or they take time off to care for family members. So they—you get a situation where women doing the same work as men, but the structure, the expectations somehow is, well, they'll take time off for family, and well, once they take time off that means that they're—it's okay to pay them a little bit less. And that builds up over time.

And we've got to have a reversal of those kinds of policies and that kind of mindset. We've got to catch up to the 21st century. We need to pass a fair pay law, make our economy stronger. It will be good for America, and it

will be good for all families and good for all kids.

While we're on the topic, women deserve to make their own health care choices, not politicians or insurance companies. And that's why the Affordable Care Act is so important. Insurance plans—because we passed the Affordable Care Act, insurance plans now have to cover the basics, including contraceptive care and prenatal care and maternity care.

That means a working mom doesn't have to put off the care she needs just so she can pay her bills on time. Tens of millions of women have new access to preventive care like mammograms with no copays, no out-of-pocket expenses. It means that a cash-strapped student doesn't have to choose between the care that she needs and the cost of textbooks.

So—and because of the Affordable Care Act, because of Obamacare, no—because of that law, no insurance company can deny you coverage based on a preexisting condition like breast cancer or charge you more for the same care just because you're a woman. That's the right thing to do.

So, no matter how many times Republicans threaten to repeal this law, we're going to keep it in place, because it's working. Not only is it covering more people, not only is it protecting women and people with preexisting conditions from discrimination, but it's actually been part of the trend that's lowering health care inflation. We're actually saving money because the system is getting smarter and there's more preventive care instead of emergency care, and we're changing how health care is delivered, which is why I'm pretty sure that in 10 years, they're not going to call it Obamacare anymore. [*Laughter*] Republicans will be, like, oh, I was for that, yes. [*Laughter*] That's how that works.

Audience member. We'll remember. [*Laughter*]

The President. You'll remember though. You'll remind them.

Now, to really make sure that women are full and equal participants in our economy, we can do some of this administratively. But it requires not just changing laws, it requires changing attitudes. And more and more companies are changing attitudes. And this is really good news.

JetBlue, for example, has a flexible work-from-home plan for its customer service reps. They've found it's led to happier, more productive employees and lower costs. Google increased paid leave for new parents—moms and dads—to 5 months. Five months. And that helped cut the rate of women leaving the company by half. And when I was having a conversation with some of the women business owners before I came out here, they were saying it's really costly when you lose a good employee and you've got to train somebody all over again. It's much more sensible from a business perspective to invest in them and make them feel like you've got their backs, and they'll stay with you.

And it's not just these big corporations that are embracing these policies. So Cheryl Snead, who is the CEO of Banneker Industries—where's Cheryl? She was here just a second. There she is back there. So Banneker Industries, a supply chain management firm, is based in North Smithfield. And when Cheryl was in college, she studied mechanical engineering. At the time, there weren't that many African American women in mechanical engineering. There still aren't. [*Laughter*] We're working to change that.

Cheryl wants to do something about that. Her company has made it a priority to find talented young women and minority students, encourage them to study science and math in college, hire them once they graduate. And what Cheryl was explaining was that having a diverse workforce, having more women in the workforce, all that makes her a stronger company. And it's not just good for the workers, it's good for business.

So, if large businesses like Google, small businesses like Cheryl's, all see the wisdom of this, let's join them. Let's encourage more women and more girls into fields like science and technology and engineering and math. And let's work with those companies to ensure that family-friendly policies can support more women in that workforce.

Ann-Marie Harrington—where is Ann? Ann-Marie is right here. So Ann-Marie, she's the president of a company called Embolden, based in Pawtucket. And it provides web services to community foundations and nonprofits. Small business—about 20 employees; 21 I think she said. She just hired somebody, must have been. [*Laughter*] But she lets them work from home and keep a flexible schedule when they need to. And she says that's increased her company's productivity.

So I'm taking a page from these companies' playbooks. This summer I directed the Federal agencies in the executive branch to put flexible workplace policies in wherever possible, make it clear that all Federal employees have the right to request them. We want the best talent to serve our country, and that means making it a little bit easier for them to maintain that work-family balance.

But these are issues that are too important to hinge on whether or not your boss is enlightened. We have to raise our voices to demand that women get paid fairly. We've got to raise our voices to make sure women can take time off to care for a loved one and that moms and dads can spend time with a new baby. We've got to raise our voices to make sure that our women maintain and keep their own health care choices. We've got to raise our voices to basically do away with policies and politicians that belong to—in a "Mad Men" episode. "Mad Men" is a good show, but that's not who we want making decisions about our workplaces these days. When women succeed, America succeeds. And we need leaders who understand that. That's what we need.

So, if you care about these policies, you've got to keep pushing for them. This shouldn't be partisan. Republicans and Democrats should be supportive of all these issues.

I was talking to Tom Perez; he had just come back from Europe. He was talking to chambers of commerce and conservative politicians. They were all supportive of family leave, supportive of childcare, because they understood it actually made the economy more productive. This isn't a liberal or conservative agenda.

When I talk to women, like the ones I spoke to earlier, when I hear folks' stories from across the country, and when I think about my own mom and how she made it all work, or my grandmother, nobody is looking at these issues through partisan lenses. We're not Democrats first or Republicans first, we are Americans first. And as Americans, it's up to us to protect and restore the ideals that made this country great.

And that is that in this country, no matter who you are, what you look like, where you come from, whether you are male or you are female, here in America, you can make it if you try. That's the promise of America. That's the future I'm going to fight for. I want you to fight there with me.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Lisbeth Avalos, student, and Nancy Carriuolo, president, Rhode Island College; and Amalia M. Perez, daughter of Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez. He also referred to his niece Leslie Robinson, nephew Avery Robinson, and sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

The President's Weekly Address
November 1, 2014

Hi, everybody. On Friday, I had a discussion with working women in Rhode Island about the economic challenges they face in their own lives, challenges shared by many of you.

Thanks to the work we've all put in, our economy has come a long way these past 6 years. Over the past 55 months, our businesses have added 10.3 million new jobs. For the first time in 6 years, the unemployment rate is below 6 percent. And on Thursday, we learned that over the past 6 months, our economy has grown at its fastest pace since 2003.

But the gains of a growing economy aren't yet felt by everyone. So we've got to harness

this momentum and make the right choices so that everyone who works hard can get ahead.

In recent weeks, I've talked about these choices, from raising the minimum wage to creating new jobs in construction and manufacturing. Today I want to focus on what I discussed with those women: the choices we need to make to help more women get ahead in today's economy.

Right now women make up almost half of our workers. More women are their family's main breadwinner than ever before. So the simple truth is, when women succeed, America succeeds. And we should be choosing policies that benefit women, because that benefits all of us.

Women deserve fair pay. Even though it's 2014, there are women still earning less than men for doing the same work. We don't have second-class citizens in this country; we shouldn't in the workplace either. So let's make sure women earn equal pay for equal work and have a fair shot at success.

Women deserve to be able to take time off to care for a new baby, an ailing parent, or take a sick day for themselves without running into hardship. So let's make sure all Americans have access to paid family leave.

Pregnant workers deserve to be treated fairly. Even today, women can be fired for taking too many bathroom breaks or forced on unpaid leave just for being pregnant. That's wrong, and we have to choose policies that ensure pregnant workers are treated with dignity and respect.

New parents deserve quality, affordable childcare. There's nothing like the peace of mind that comes with knowing that your kids are safe while you're at work. And the benefits that children get out of early enrichment can pay off for a lifetime. But in many States, sending your kid to daycare costs more than sending them to a public university. So let's start demanding pre-K for our kids.

And when most low-wage workers are women, but Congress hasn't passed a minimum wage increase in 7 years, it's long past time that women deserve a raise. About 28 million workers would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour, and more than half of those workers are women. The local businesses where these workers spend their money would benefit too. So let's do this. Let's give America a raise.

All of these policies are common sense. All of them are within our reach. We've just got to speak up and choose them, because they'll build a stronger America for all of us.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 12 p.m. on October 30 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on November 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 31, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 1.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Senatorial Candidate Gary C. Peters and Gubernatorial Candidate Mark H. Schauer in Detroit, Michigan
November 1, 2014

The President. Hello, Detroit! Oh, it's good to be back in Michigan! It's good to be back at Wayne State! Go Warriors!

Give it up for a Wayne State alum, your next Senator, Gary Peters! Give it up for your next Governor, Mark Schauer! We've got some outstanding lawmakers who are here today: my friend Carl Levin, Debbie Stabenow, John Conyers, Sandy Levin. We've got the dean of the House, John Dingell; the next Representative from Michigan's 12th, Debbie Dingell. We've got a full house. We've got folks fired up. We've got folks ready to go.

Three days. Three days, Michigan. Three days. Three days until you get to choose a new Governor and a new Senator. And here's what you've got to do until then. If you came to this rally, I know you also are going to go vote or are—I don't worry about you. I need you to grab a friend. I need you to get some classmates.

I need you to get some coworkers. I need you to knock on some doors and make some phone calls. I need you to visit iwillvote.com, find your polling place. Take everybody you know to cast their ballots for Gary Peters and Mark Schauer. And then tell them to vote for Lisa Brown and Mark Totten and Godfrey Dillard and Warren Evans and Brenda Lawrence. Tell them to vote. [*Applause*] Tell them to vote.

Let me tell you why.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you too. But I want to tell you why you need to vote. This country has made real progress since the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes. Over the past 4½ years, we have seen American businesses create more than 10 million new jobs. Over the past 6 months, our economy has grown at the fastest pace in more than 10 years.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. I don't have to tell you the auto industry that was on the brink of collapse is back on its feet, making better cars than ever, right here in Michigan. It's a testament to the grit and the resilience of American workers. We've got some leaders here who stick up for working folks every single day. We've got Mary Kay Henry from SEIU. We've got Lily Eskelsen Garcia from the NEA. We've got Dennis Williams from the UAW. We've got some labor leaders here who know what it means to fight for working families.

And because of the strength and resilience of the American worker, the auto industry has come back. Housing is beginning to recover. We've seen progress on almost every economic measure. But we are here tonight because we know we've got more work to do. As fast as we've been moving, we know we'd be moving faster if a lot more of our politicians lived by the same values of hard work and responsibility that the ordinary people they represent take with them every single day when they go to the job. And over the next week, you've got a chance to make that happen. You have the chance to choose leaders that don't put political ideology first, that don't put just winning an election first, they put you first.

And you couldn't have a better example than Mark and Gary. You couldn't have a better example of the kind of leaders you want. I mean, look at these two guys. They've spent their entire lives in Michigan. Mark ran a nonprofit that helped unemployed workers get back on their feet. Gary helped folks save for college and retirement as a financial planner. Then he served in the Navy Reserve. They ran for office for the same reason: to fight for hard-working families like yours, because your story is their story.

They weren't born with a silver spoon in their mouths. They know what it's like to struggle. They know what it's like to have to work hard and piece together a budget and save. And they know what it's like when their parents or grandparents make sacrifices for them. And since they've taken office, they've led. They led to clean up the Great Lakes. They helped to cut taxes for Michigan's small businesses and invest in new, high-tech manufacturing. They fought to give Michigan's minimum wage workers the raise they deserve.

When the chips were down and our most iconic industry was on the line, they said, we shouldn't walk away. If the auto industry went down, communities across this State and Midwest would have gone down too. So Mark and Gary placed their bet on Michigan. They placed their bet on American workers, making American products. And thanks to the grit and ingenuity and pride of American workers, that bet that they made paid off in a big way.

Now, some of the folks who figured we should have thrown in the towel 6 years ago are the same folks who are asking you for your vote next week. They've got a lot of nerve. [*Applause*] They've got a lot of nerve. If they're not there for you when you need them—[*laughter*]—I think you should vote for Mark and Gary instead. That's what I think. Because you know they had your backs, and now we've got to get theirs.

And that's what this election is all about, Michigan. When you step into that voting booth, you are making a choice not just about candidates or parties. You're making a choice about two different visions of what America is

about. And it boils down to a simple question: Who is on your side? Who's going to fight for you? Who's going to fight for your future?

Now, I want to be clear. Republicans are good people, they're patriots. They love their country. They love their family.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. No, but I mean what I say here. Listen, I mean what I say. We're all Americans. We're all Americans. We're Americans first. So they're patriots. They love this country. But they've got bad ideas.

Audience members. That's right!

The President. And I always try to explain, look, I've got members of my family who I love and have bad ideas. [*Laughter*] I still love them, I just wouldn't put them in charge. [*Laughter*] Right? You all have got somebody in your family like that. You're going to have them over for Thanksgiving, but you don't want to put them in charge. [*Laughter*] Am I right?

And the worst idea they've got is this same economic theory that they just keep on putting out that we know undermines the middle class: More tax breaks for folks at the top, less investment in education, looser rules on big banks and credit card companies and polluters, a thinner safety net for folks when they fall on hard times. You know what, we've tried those things.

Audience member. They don't work!

The President. They don't work. Don't work. I mean, it would be one thing if we hadn't tried them. We might say, okay, well, maybe that works. [*Laughter*] But when you've done it again and again, and each time the middle class has a tougher time, and the folks at the top are doing better and better, I don't know why we would think it would work differently this time.

They're not changing their tune either. Every time the Republican Party leaders in Washington had to take a stand this year on policies that would help the middle class, their answer was no. They said no to raising the minimum wage. They said no to fair pay legislation to make sure women get paid the same as men for doing the same job. They said no to helping young people refinance their student loans. They actually voted for rules that would make it more expensive for students when they take out student loans.

The only thing they voted yes on was another massive tax cut for millionaires. I know that's shocking, but it's true. And it's the clearest display of whose side they're on. The same Washington Republicans who blocked a $2.85-an-hour raise for some of the hardest working people in America—the folks who clean up your bedpans, the folks that make up and take care of seniors—they made clear that they're not going to do that. One of the first things they do is change the rules to jam tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans through. They're not going to raise the minimum wage.

Their leadership said tax cuts for those at the top are "even more pressing now" than they were 30 years ago. That's what they said. When one of George W. Bush's economic advisers took a look at how many jobs their agenda would create, he said, "not many." That's George W. Bush's adviser admitting. They don't have an agenda for the middle class. They don't have an agenda for Detroit. They don't have an agenda for Michigan. At a time when nearly all the gains of this recovery are flowing to the top 1 percent, cutting taxes for those same folks doesn't make any sense. It's the wrong vision for the future.

But the good news is Mark and Gary have a different vision, a vision rooted in the conviction that in America, prosperity does not trickle down from the top, it comes up from folks who are working every single day, middle class folks, folks trying to work hard to get into the middle class. That's what we believe as Democrats. That's what we believe here in Michigan. We believe in an economy that grows for the many, not the few.

Audience member. That's right!

The President. Mark and Gary are not running to give tax breaks to folks who don't need them. He's running to build economies—Michigan's economy from the middle class out. They know that the ideas to create jobs, they're not Democrat or Republican, but they've got to work. They've got to work. And they know

that education, for example, isn't just the key to economic growth, it's the surest path into the middle class. They're not going to slash investments in schools or make it harder for students to go to college. They're going to make it easier for students to go to college and make sure teachers are respected and make sure we've got early childhood education for our kids. That's what they're going to run on.

We believe that in America, public servants should work for the people they represent. Instead of wasting taxpayer dollars on frivolous lawsuits or ideological crusades, Mark and Gary will spend their time protecting ordinary citizens, making your lives better. And by the way, as your next Attorney General, that's what former prosecutor Mark Totten will focus on too: looking out for you.

Let me tell you something else that Mark and Gary believe in. They don't think if you're working full time in this country you should be raising your family in poverty. They're not backed by special interests who think that the minimum wage is something we should get rid of, they're running because they think we should champion the efforts of folks who work hard, but still have trouble paying the bills at the end of the month. That's what they believe. That's what they're going to fight for. And if you believe that too, you've got to vote.

Mark and Gary believe that the economy is stronger when women are full participants in our economy. I already told you Republicans said no to a national fair pay law. One of the Republicans running for national office, he said—I'm quoting here—he said, "You could argue that money is more important for men."

Audience members. No!

The President. That's a quote. Now, I don't know what woman he talked to. [*Laughter*] He didn't talk to you. Did he talk to you? No.

Audience members. No!

The President. I know he didn't talk to Michelle. [*Laughter*] No. See, if you're going to strengthen the 21st-century economy, you've got to be in the 21st century. You've got to understand that women now make up an increasing part of the workforce. They're bringing home more of the bacon. They need to be paid fairly and treated fairly.

And just like Gary talked about, we've got to make sure that women control their own health care choices. Not their boss or their insurer, and certainly not any politician. You know, it's funny, if you ask a Republican in Congress if they believe in climate change, they say, "Well, uh, I'm not a scientist." "I'm not a scientist"—that's what they say. But when it comes to a woman's right to choose, suddenly, they're a doctor. [*Laughter*] It's like, come on, now. They've got to update their attitudes.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. "Mad Men" is a good show. I like that show. But it's set in the sixties. We're now in the 21st century. And we've got to understand that in America, when women succeed, America succeeds.

So look, here's the bottom line. I know that, as I said, if you're here, you're going to vote. I get that. But I want you to feel a sense of urgency these last 3 days. The biggest corporations don't need another champion. The wealthiest Americans don't need another champion. You do. Opportunity for a few is not what Michigan is about. Opportunity for all is what built the middle class in this country.

And that's why you've got to vote. If you want something better, you've got to vote for it. You've got to work for it. If you believe working families need a tax break, not millionaires, you've got to vote for it. If you think we should invest in our children's schools and give teachers more support and get early childhood education in place so young people get a good start in life, and young people going to college aren't burdened with tens of thousands of dollars' worth of debt, you've got to vote for it. You've got to fight for it. If you think that folks who work hard should get an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, you've got to vote for it.

You know, I tell you, we give away our power all the time. Some of you know I started as a community organizer. And when I talked to folks in the community, the first thing I'd say is, why do you give away your power? And

they'd say, what do you mean? And I'd say, well, you don't bother voting. You sit at home and complain. But complaining and not voting, that means you're just giving away your power. That means you are—you're giving away your precious right to help determine the course of your Nation.

So look, Michigan, you've had my back twice. [*Applause*] You've had my back twice. I love this State. But here's the problem. In recent years, Michigan has led the Nation in the number of voters who vote for President, but then stay home during the midterms. According to one estimate, you've got 900,000 folks in Michigan who voted in 2008 and then didn't vote in 2010—900,000. I don't know what's going on with those folks. But we've got to let them know their vote matters.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Their vote could decide whether 28 million American workers get the raise they deserve, whether American families continue to benefit from new health care coverage. Because, I don't know if you've noticed, but Obamacare works. Pretty soon, they're not going to call it Obamacare anymore. [*Laughter*] You know that's right. [*Laughter*]

Your vote will decide the course that Michigan takes from here. So Gary needs your vote, Mark needs your vote, I need your vote. But I also need you to go out there and get involved in these closing days. Talk to one of the organizers who are in the room. Or go to markschauer.com. Or go to petersformichigan.com. Volunteer for these last 3 days. Make some phone calls these last 3 days. Knock on some doors these last 3 days. Grab somebody you know, get them to vote for Mark. Get them to vote for Gary.

This election is too important to stay home. Don't let somebody else choose your future for you. When we vote, we win. [*Applause*] When we vote, we win. When we vote——

Audience members. We win!

The President. ——we win.

The hardest thing in politics is changing the status quo. When you've got a lot of people in power, they care about just keeping power, they don't care about helping you. And they count on you getting cynical. They count on you thinking you can't make a difference. They hope you don't get involved. They hope you don't organize. They hope you don't vote. And every day, they're sending you a message that you don't count.

Don't buy it. Despite all the cynicism, America is making progress. Despite the unyielding opposition of folks on the other side, there are workers who have jobs today who didn't have them before. There are auto plants who've got shifts that weren't there before. There are families who have health insurance who didn't have it before. There are students who are going to college who couldn't afford it before. There are troops who've been coming home from Afghanistan who weren't home before. There are the best cars in America and in the world rolling off assembly lines right here in Michigan, right here in the United States, that weren't coming off those assembly lines before.

Don't let them tell you that your vote doesn't matter. Don't get cynical. Cynicism didn't put a man on the Moon.

Audience members. No!

The President. Cynicism never cured a disease or started a business or built a V–8 engine or taught a young mind. Cynicism is a choice. And hope is a better choice.

Hope is what defeated fascism. Hope is what gave young people the strength to march for civil rights and voting rights and gay rights and immigrants' rights and women's rights. Hope that there are better days ahead. Hope that we can rebuild our middle class and pass on to our kids something better. That's what built America. That's what Motor City is all about. That's what built Michigan!

Our best days are still ahead. Believe it. And vote for Mark, and vote for Gary. And let's get out there and win this thing.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:09 p.m. in the Matthaei Building at Wayne State University. In his remarks, he referred to Deborah A. Dingell, chair of the board of governors, Wayne State University, in her capacity as the

Democratic congressional candidate for Michigan's 12th District; Lisa Brown, county clerk/register of deeds, Oakland County, MI, in her capacity as the Democratic candidate for Lieutenant Governor; Godfrey Dillard, Democratic candidate for secretary of state of Michigan; Warren C. Evans, Democratic candidate for county executive of Wayne County, MI; Mayor Brenda Lawrence of Southfield, MI, in her capacity as the Democratic congressional candidate for Michigan's 14th District; Mary Kay Henry, international president, Service Employees International Union (SEIU); Lily Eskelsen Garcia, president, National Education Association; Dennis Williams, president, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW); Matthew J. Slaughter, professor of economics, Dartmouth College's Tuck School of Business, in his former capacity as a member of former President George W. Bush's Council of Economic Advisers; and State Sen. Glenn Grothman of Wisconsin.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Governor Dannel P. Malloy in Bridgeport, Connecticut

November 2, 2014

The President. Hello, Bridgeport! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Give it up for Dan Malloy, your outstanding Governor! It's good to be back in Connecticut. Give it up for your Lieutenant Governor, Nancy Wyman; your outstanding Senators, Dick Blumenthal—[*applause*]—Chris Murphy; your Representatives, Joe Courtney, Rosa DeLauro, Jim Himes, Elizabeth Esty—even though she couldn't be here today; and your mayor, Bill Finch. And——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. [*Laughter*] And thanks for having me at Central. Go Hilltoppers!

I've got to say, the Hilltoppers made me feel very welcome. They had all kinds of stuff up on the wall: "Welcome, President Obama," "We love you, President Obama." They had a big painting somebody had made, which was very good, although I noticed, like, the mole on my nose was really prominent. [*Laughter*] So, like, there was big circle right there. [*Laughter*]

So, Connecticut, 2 days. Two days. Two days, and you get to choose the Governor who will lead you for the next 4 years. I can't vote in Connecticut, but I'll tell you who I'd vote for. I'd want Dan Malloy leading us for another 4 years. Four more years! Four more years!

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Four more years! [*Laughter*]

Now, what that means—since it seems like you all agree with me—what that means is you've got to grab your friends, you've got to grab your classmates, you've got to grab your coworkers. You've got to knock on some doors. You've got to make some phone calls. You need to visit iwillvote.com. You've got to find your polling place. And then, you've got to take everybody you know to cast their ballot for Dan Malloy.

See, I'm assuming if you took time to come to the rally that you're going to vote. Unless you thought the basketball season started early and you showed up thinking there was a game. [*Laughter*] But here's why it's so important for you to get other people to vote.

Audience member. I am a DREAMer. I—[*inaudible*].

The President. I love you. I appreciate you too. Thank you. Thank you. So—hold on, young lady. Hold on a second. Hold on. Hold on. You're a DREAMer, and I gave you relief administratively, and we're going to work on the next one. The Republicans are blocking immigration reform. That's one more reason why we need a Democratic Senate. So I support you. I'm with you. I'm with you. [*Applause*] I'm with you. And you need to go pro-

test the Republicans. Because I'm not the one blocking it. So——

Now, let me talk about Dan Malloy. Dan Malloy won a tough election last time. He took office facing record job losses, massive deficits, the worst recession in decades. But he took on a tough challenge. He made the tough calls. And while it has not always been easy and it has not always been without sacrifice, there is progress here in Connecticut to be proud of. You've had the fastest job growth in decades. You've had the lowest unemployment rate in 5 years, a budget that is actually balanced, a rainy day fund that is actually funded.

And thanks to leaders like Dan——

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

Audience member. Be quiet!

Audience members. Shame on you!

The President. Shame on you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. So listen, here's the good thing about a democracy, is everybody can speak. As I said before, it's always ironic that the folks who are shouting don't understand that we actually support their issue. The folks who don't support the issue are the ones who are voting against Dan Malloy. So they need to go to the other rally and focus on them.

Now, where was I? Where was I? I was talking about 4 more years. Thank you. All right, let's try it again. You've got leaders like Dan with the kind of commitment to working families that Connecticut needs. And thanks to him, and thanks to the grit and the resilience of the American people, the country as a whole has made real progress. You think about when I came into office, we were seeing the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes. Unemployment was about 800,000 per month we were losing jobs. And over the past 4½ years, America has created more than 10 million new jobs. We've created more jobs than Japan, Europe, and all the advanced countries combined. Over the past 6 months, our economy has grown at the fastest pace in more than 10 years. There's almost no economic measure where we are not doing better now than when Dan took office or when I took office.

But, Bridgeport, we're here today because Dan and I and all the congressional delegation here, they understand we've got more work to do. We've got more work to do to make sure that all kids grow up in an America where it doesn't matter who you are, what you look like, where you came from, what your last name is, who you love. What matters is, are you willing to work hard, are you willing to take responsibility? Because if you are, you deserve to be able to make it in America. That's what the American Dream is all about.

So, when you cast that vote on Tuesday, you've got a choice to make. It's more than a choice between candidates or political parties. [*Laughter*]

[*There was a disruption in the audience.*]

Audience member. Get out!

Audience member. Get out of here!

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's okay.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. It's a choice that we've got to make. Hold on a second. Hold on a second, everybody. Quiet down. It's a choice that we've got to make between two very different visions of America. And by the way, I just want to say—because we've now had, like, three folks—I am sympathetic to those who are concerned about immigration, because the truth of the matter is, is that we're a country of immigrants. That's why we fought for immigration reform. It's the other party that's blocked it. Unfortunately, folks get frustrated, and so they want to yell at everybody. And I understand that. But this is part of why elections are so important, because we do have two different visions of America.

Now, the vision I have, the vision Dan has, is one that embraces immigrants. The other side has a very different vision, which is why they've blocked legislation that would solve it. And so, in all these issues, it comes down to a very simple issue: Who's going to fight for your future? Who is going to fight on your behalf?

You know, Republicans—listen, Republicans are patriots. They love their country. They love their family.

Audience member. No, they don't!

The President. No, they do. There are some good folks. But here's the thing. But here's the thing.

[*There was a disruption in the audience.*]

The President. Hold on a second. Here's the thing. This is a rowdy crowd today. The—but here's the thing. [*Laughter*] Hold on, hold on. Quiet down, quiet down. Listen, just because folks are good folks doesn't mean they've got good ideas.

I was telling folks in Wisconsin the other day, I've got some family members who I love, but they've got bad ideas. [*Laughter*] So I don't want them in charge of anything. [*Laughter*] Some of them will be over for Thanksgiving, and I'll hug them, and I'll give them a piece of pie, but I wouldn't want to put them in charge. [*Laughter*]

And that's sort of what we've got going with the Republican Party right now, because they just keep on offering a theory of the economy time and time again that has undermined the middle class. It's not like we haven't tried it. We tried it: tax breaks for folks who don't need them, at the very top; fewer investments in things like education; looser rules on big banks or polluters; cutting the safety net for folks if they fall on hard times. We tried all that stuff. It did not work. And so we don't want to go back to that vision.

And Dan has a very different vision for what the future looks like. It's a vision rooted in the conviction that in America, prosperity never trickles down from the top. It grows from a rising, thriving middle class. It grows because we give folks ladders into the middle class. We believe in an economy that grows for the many, not just for the few. And Dan—this is personal for him. We were talking on the helicopter ride over. [*Laughter*] It was a little windy. [*Laughter*] And—but Dan was talking about, sort of, what it meant growing up with a learning disability and having a few people there who believed in him and fought for him and some resources that were given so that he could show really what he could do. And you don't lose that sense of being the underdog. You don't lose that sense of somebody else giving you a hand up. And that's what his politics are based on.

He's not running to cut his own taxes, he's running to cut taxes for that single mom who needs a little help with her childcare. He's not looking to give advantages to big corporations who already have lobbyists looking out for them. He's running to fight for you. And he knows that ideas should be judged not on whether they're Democratic or Republican, but on whether they work or not.

And we believe in this country that education isn't just the key to economic growth, it's the surest path into the middle class. And while some Governors are saying "tough luck" to parents who can't afford to send their kids to private schools, Dan's worked to invest in our public schools—just like this one—to bring down the cost of higher education, to make college a reality for young people. That's what Dan believes, because it worked in his own life.

We believe in access to affordable health care, that it's not a privilege, it's a right. There are Governors out there who've kept hard-working Americans from getting health insurance. Dan has expanded Medicaid to tens of thousands of folks here in Connecticut. They didn't have health insurance before; now they have it.

There are some Governors out there who've been trying to keep the Affordable Care Act from working. Dan has helped to create one of the best marketplaces in the country and cut the numbers of people without health insurance in Connecticut in half. And this shouldn't be a blue or a red issue. This shouldn't be a Democratic or Republican issue. This is an American issue. Why would you run on a platform of giving fewer people health insurance? That doesn't make any sense.

Dan believes that in America, nobody who works full time should ever have to raise their family in poverty. Not all Governors believe that. You had one Republican Governor claim that the minimum wage "serves no purpose." Tell that to all the folks who are struggling to

get by. Dan understands it makes a difference. He knows the difference it can make to that hard-working mom or dad who's trying to make ends meet. While some folks in this State tried to come up with an excuse to oppose minimum wage increases, Dan fought to give Connecticut a raise. That's what he fought for. That's what he believed.

Earlier this year, I went to New Britain with Dan and three other New England Governors. We had lunch at a sandwich shop where the owners paid their employees a living wage of at least $10 an hour. A few weeks later, Dan became the first Governor in the country to sign a law lifting the minimum wage in this State to $10.10 an hour. And 130,000 hard-working folks across Connecticut got the raise they deserve.

We believe in an America where we do better when women are full and equal participants in our economy. We've had some issues in Washington with Republicans saying no to a national fair pay law. We had one Republican running for national office right now who said, and I'm quoting, "You could argue that money is more important for men."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, I don't know who he was talking to. He wasn't talking to Michelle. [*Laughter*] If we're going to strengthen the middle class for the 21st century, then we need leaders with a 21st-century mindset. They need to understand that women need to get paid fairly. Let's make sure that every woman is getting paid the same for doing the same job—[*applause*].

And let's make sure every woman controls her own health care choices, not her boss and not some politician. Republicans are funny. [*Laughter*] If you ask them, do they believe in climate change, they say, "I'm not a scientist." [*Laughter*] If you ask them, does a woman have a right to make her own health care choices, suddenly, they're all doctors. [*Laughter*] When women succeed, America succeeds. We've got to understand that. And so you can't support candidates who think that "Mad Man" is not just a good show, but a model for how to behave. [*Laughter*] We need a different approach.

Look, so here's the bottom line, Connecticut. The biggest corporations, they don't need another champion. The wealthiest Americans don't need another champion. You do. You need somebody to fight for you. You need somebody who understands that opportunity—opening up opportunity for all people—is what Connecticut is about. Opportunity for all.

But none of that happens unless you go vote.

Audience member. That's right!

The President. If you want something better, you've got to vote for it. If you believe working families need more tax breaks, not millionaires, you've got to vote for it. If you think we should be investing in our kids' schools and in early childhood education and making college more affordable, you've got to vote for it. I meet so many young people who've got an opportunity to do better, but that you—but they don't—they aren't getting the kind of stuff that they need.

[*There was a disruption in the audience.*]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. So the question is, are we going to vote?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. You can't say we're going to give an honest day's pay for an honest day's work and then not vote. You can't say, well, Dan Malloy is doing a good job and then not vote.

Audience members. Right!

The President. Four years ago, Dan won the Governor's race by just four votes per precinct. Four votes. Because of those four extra votes, 130,000 Connecticut workers got a raise. Because of those four votes, Connecticut families gained access to health insurance to take care of their kids. Those four votes helped cut your uninsured rate in half, put Connecticut on a path for universal pre-K for every child, brought your unemployment rate down.

So your vote matters. Don't let people tell you it doesn't. On Tuesday, your vote will determine the course for Connecticut. So we've

got to—we need your vote. But we need, more importantly, the vote of your friends, your neighbors, your colleagues.

Audience member. You've got them!

The President. Go talk to one of the organizers in this room, or go to danmalloy2014.com. Volunteer these last couple of days. Make some phone calls. Knock on some doors. Grab everybody you know, get them out to vote. Don't stay home. Don't let somebody else choose your future for you.

Look, the hardest thing in politics is changing the status quo. And it's even harder when folks in power are ignoring what you have to say and seem to not really be listening to ordinary families. And then the media is feeding you information that says, well, it's not going to make a difference, this is how it's going to be. And so you get cynical. You don't think you're going to make a difference. You don't get involved. You don't organize. You don't vote.

And I'm here to tell you, don't buy it. Despite all the cynicism, America is making progress. Despite unyielding opposition, there are workers who have jobs today that didn't have it before. There are families who have health insurance today that didn't have it before. There are kids going to college today that didn't have the opportunity to go to college before. There are troops who were in Afghanistan who are now home with their families because of your vote.

Cynicism didn't put a man on the Moon. Cynicism has never won a war or cured a disease or built a business or fed a young mind. Cynicism is a choice, and hope is a better choice.

Hope is what gave young people the strength to march for civil rights and voting rights and women's rights and workers' rights and gay rights and immigrants' rights. Hope is what put a man on the Moon. Hope is what defeated fascism. Hope is what America is all about, hope in better days, hope in building up a middle class, hope in handing down something better to our kids.

That's why you have to vote. That's what Dan Malloy believes. That's what you have to remember on Tuesday, November 4.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:48 p.m. at Central High School. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Scott K. Walker and State Sen. Glenn Grothman of Wisconsin; Gov. Peter E. Shumlin of Vermont; Gov. Lincoln D. Chafee of Rhode Island; and Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts.

Statement on International Day To End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists

November 2, 2014

History shows that a free press remains a critical foundation for prosperous, open, and secure societies, allowing citizens to access information and hold their governments accountable. Indeed, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reiterates the fundamental principle that every person has the right "to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Each and every day, brave journalists make extraordinary risks to bring us stories we otherwise would not hear: exposing corruption, asking tough questions, or bearing witness to the dignity of innocent men, women, and children suffering the horrors of war. In this service to humanity, hundreds of journalists have been killed in the past decade alone, while countless more have been harassed, threatened, imprisoned, and tortured. In the overwhelming majority of these cases, the perpetrators of these crimes against journalists go unpunished.

All governments must protect the ability of journalists to write and speak freely. On this first-ever International Day To End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, the United States commends the priceless contributions by journalists to the freedom and security of us

all, shining light into the darkness and giving voice to the voiceless. We honor the sacrifices so many journalists have made in their quest for the truth and demand accountability for those who have committed crimes against journalists.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Gubernatorial Candidate Thomas W. Wolf in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

November 2, 2014

The President. Hello, Philly! Hello, Temple! Give it up for your next Governor, Tom Wolf! We've also got one of the best Senators in the country, Bob Casey; Congressman Chaka Fattah; your mayor, Michael Nutter—[*laughter*]—one of your State senators and your next Lieutenant Governor, Mike Stack.

We've got three outstanding congressional candidates here today that deserve your vote, so I want you guys to pay attention. You've got to go all the way down the ballot. We've got Dr. Manan Trivedi, who is going to be a great Member of Congress—[*applause*]—served his country with the Marines in Iraq. We've got Kevin Strouse, who served his country as an Army Ranger in Iraq and Afghanistan. We've got Brendan Boyle, who's lived out the American Dream as the first in his family to go to college. All three of them, they're young, they're sharp, they're hard-working. They're ready to fight for you if you send them to Washington. Make sure to vote for them.

And we've got all of you. This is a good-looking crowd right here. Now, those of you, if you've got a seat, if you want to sit down, feel free.

Audience members. No!

The President. [*Laughter*] You want to stand up. All right, that's good. [*Laughter*] That's good, because I'm going to try to get you out of your seats, because we've got some work to do. Because 2 days from now, you get to choose your future. Now, if you came to this rally, I suspect you already know there's an election and you are planning to vote. Otherwise, you thought there was a basketball game here, and that's not the case. [*Laughter*] So I need all of you to go grab your friends, grab your classmates, talk to your coworkers. Knock on some doors. Make some phone calls. Check out iwillvote.com.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you too, but I need you to vote. And—so go to iwillvote.com, find out where your polling place is. And then take your people—your friends, your neighbors—to the polls. And when you do, make sure they vote for Tom Wolf.

Let me tell you why. Let me tell you why. First of all, Tom is just a nice guy. [*Laughter*] You can tell he's a sincere person. He's not a professional politician. He's somebody who knows how to create jobs, knows how to start a business, knows how to serve the public. He's in it for the right reasons. You know he's going to do a good job. But also, I need everybody to recognize the moment we're in. The country has made real progress since the worst economic crisis of our lifetime.

You think about where we were when I came into office. The economy was in free fall. The auto industry was about to disappear. Housing prices were collapsing, financial system in chaos. Our unemployment rate went over 10 percent. And now, over the past 4½ years, America's businesses have created more than 10 million new jobs. Over the past 6 months, our economy has grown at the fastest pace in more than a decade. There's almost no economic measure where we're not doing better: deficits cut by more than half, energy production up, high school graduation rates up, college attendance rates up. Clean energy, we've doubled. Carbon emissions, we have slowed. So we've made progress on every item.

But what we also know, the reason we're here, is because we've got so much more work to do. Not everybody has felt growth in the economy. You know right here in Pennsylvania

that, unfortunately, because we've had a Governor who doesn't always work with us, Pennsylvania ranks second to last in the country in job growth. Second to last. You don't want to be second to last.

Audience members. No!

The President. And over the next week, you've got a chance to change that. You can choose a Governor who doesn't put political ideology first, he puts you first. And that's the kind of Governor you want.

And Tom understands the economy. As a successful businessman, Tom helped grow his family's company into the largest supplier of kitchen cabinets in the United States. Now, there are a lot of kitchen cabinets in the United States, so—[*laughter*]—I'm just saying. There are—you think about how many kitchen cabinets there are. If you're the largest, that's a lot of kitchen cabinets. [*Laughter*]

In 2006, he left that business, served as your secretary of revenue. Then in 2009, he was getting ready to run for Governor, but he got a phone call. The company he had spent 25 years growing—the company he had left 3 years earlier—was facing a very tough time because it was right when the recession was hitting, so like thousands of other businesses across the country, it was on the brink of bankruptcy. And Tom could have decided, you know what, that's not my problem anymore. But he wasn't going to turn his back on his former employees. So he put his future on hold, brought the company back, started sourcing cabinets made in America to compete with Chinese imports. Made sure his workers earned good benefits and good wages. He gave more than 20 percent of his profits back to his employees, because Tom believes if you work hard, then everybody in your company should share your success, not just folks at the top, but the workers who are actually doing the work.

So Tom doesn't just—he doesn't just talk the talk. Talk is cheap. He walked the walk. He's walking that walk. Tom knows how to create jobs here in Pennsylvania. He's done it. And now he's running because he believes that if you work hard in this State, if you work hard in this country, you should share in the country's success. And Tom has proven that when the going gets tough, he's got your back.

That's what this election is all about. When you step in the voting booth, you're making a choice not just about party, not just about candidates. You're making a choice about two different visions of America. And you've got to ask yourself, who's going to be fighting for you? Who's going to be on your side? Who cares about the single mom? Who cares about the student who's maybe the first in their family to go to college? Who's going to fight for you?

Audience members. Tom Wolf!

The President. Tom Wolf—that's a good answer. [*Laughter*] You're paying attention.

Now, listen. Listen, I want to say this. Republicans are patriots too. They love their families. They want what's best for the country. But I was trying to explain—I was down in Connecticut—I was trying to explain there are a lot of people in my family who I really love, but I wouldn't put them in charge. [*Laughter*] Because they've got bad ideas. [*Laughter*] Right? So I'm not saying there's anything wrong with the Republican leadership as, sort of—like, as Americans. I'm just saying they've got bad ideas.

They keep on offering this theory of the economy: You give more tax breaks to folks at the top, you cut investments in things like education, you loosen up regulations on the big banks and polluters and credit card companies, you cut the safety net for folks who've fallen on hard times, and somehow everybody is going to get better off.

Here's the thing. I guess if we hadn't tried that for 10 years, resulting in ultimate disaster, maybe they'd have an argument. But we did try it. It didn't work. We can't go back to that. We've got to go forward with Tom Wolf.

Tom has a different vision for what this country should look like, and it's rooted in that core belief in America, the notion that prosperity doesn't trickle down from the top. Prosperity derives from a thriving middle class and folks working their way up into the middle class. And when everybody is doing well, then

the entire country does well. That's his understanding of how the economy works.

He wants—Tom wants to build Pennsylvania's economy from the middle class out. And he's not ideological about it. Look, here's the thing you know about Tom. He doesn't care whether the idea is Republican or Democrat as long as it works. He's a practical person who just wants to make it work for the people of Pennsylvania.

So he knows, for example, that education is the key not just to economic growth, but also to personal advancement in a modern economy. So he's not going to run on an agenda of slashing budgets for our schools or laying off thousands of teachers. He knows teachers matter. He knows you should support teachers, not run down teachers; that we should respect teachers and treat them as the professionals they are.

He knows we should invest in our kids and early childhood education and make college a reality for more young people and make it more affordable. That's Tom's plan for Pennsylvania.

Tom believes that in a democracy like ours, elected officials serve the public, not the other way around. So he's not running to serve special interests or the status quo. He's running to change the way business is done in Harrisburg.

He believes that nobody who works full time in this country should have to raise a family in poverty. Tom—we had one Republican Governor recently say the minimum wage "serves no purpose." You're not going to hear Tom say that, because he knows the difference that a little bit of money can make for that hard-working mom or dad who's trying to make ends meet, save maybe for their kids' college education, pay a few bills. That's why Tom isn't running against a minimum wage increase, he's running to give Pennsylvania a raise.

Tom Wolf believes that America is stronger when women are full and equal participants in the economy. It's bad enough that we've got Republicans in Congress who voted no on a fair pay law. You had—we had one Republican who's running for national office say, "You could argue that money is more important for men." That's a quote. He said that. Now, I know he didn't talk to Michelle when he said that. [*Laughter*] I know he didn't talk to you, either, did he?

Audience members. No!

The President. If we're going to strengthen the middle class for the 21st century, we need leaders who understand the 21st century and understand that women are in the workforce and understand that women are increasingly breadwinners in their family and understand that they should be able to get paid the same as men for doing the same job. And while we're at it, we should make sure that women have control of their health care choices, not some politician.

You know, it's funny, when you ask Republicans about climate change, they say, "I'm not a scientist." [*Laughter*] That's what they say. But when you ask them about a woman's right to make her own health care decisions, they all act like they're doctors. I want women to make those decisions. I mean, "Mad Men" is a good show, but we don't want that show in Harrisburg.

Audience members. Right!

The President. Because when women succeed, America succeeds. And I want Malia and Sasha to have the same opportunities as somebody's son. That should be common sense.

So look, here's the bottom line. The biggest corporations, they don't need another champion. The wealthiest Americans don't need another champion. They're doing just fine. But you know what is in need of a champion is somebody who understands opportunity for all is what America is all about, opportunity for all is what Pennsylvania is all about. And that's what Tom believes.

But listen, you all have to vote. That's what this comes down to. You've got to vote!

You know, I was talking to one of my staff members, and we were just running through the numbers. The number of eligible voters who vote typically in a midterm is, like, in the thirties. I mean, Ukraine just went through an election; they got a war going on, they had about 60-percent turnout. [*Laughter*] There is no excuse for us to just give away our power. If

you wonder why things don't happen, if you wonder why sometimes elected officials don't seem responsive, it's because so many of us stay at home.

So I know I'm preaching to the choir, but I'm hoping you then take this message to folks who aren't planning to vote. If you believe that we don't need to give millionaires another tax break, maybe give childcare tax breaks to families who are really struggling, you've got to vote for it. If you believe that our kids should have the best schools, then you've got to vote for it. If you think that we should make it easier for young people to go to college without ending up with tens of thousands of dollars' worth of debt, you've got to vote for it. If you believe that an honest day's work deserves an honest day's pay, you've got to vote for it.

You've got to vote! You've got to vote! Vote! You've got to vote!

Audience members. Vote!

The President. This is straightforward. I've got a simple message: We've got to vote.

Audience members. Got to vote!

The President. Four years ago, Democrats lost——

Audience members. Vote!

[*At this point, the President pointed to members of the audience holding up the letters V–O–T–E.*]

The President. Vote! Vote! Vote!

Audience members. Vote! Vote! Vote!

The President. Good job! Can I just say, by the way, it took me forever to cut those letters out. [*Laughter*] I mean, I had one of those little scissors, and I mean, it's just—[*laughter*].

Listen, 4 years ago, the Democrats lost the Governor's race in Pennsylvania by 20 votes per precinct—20 votes. That was your cousin Pookie—[*laughter*]—not voting. That was Jim, who was, like, drinking beer—[*laughter*]—and playing his—setting up his fantasy football for next week, and he didn't vote. That's what happens. Twenty votes could decide whether millions of hard-working Pennsylvanians get the raise they deserve. Those 20 votes could decide whether teachers get the support they need and whether our kids get a fair shot. Twenty votes. Your vote matters. It decides the course that Pennsylvania will take.

So I don't just need you to vote, because I know all of you are going to vote. You've got to get involved. There are organizers here. As you're going out, you should try to hook up with them and talk to them about volunteering. Go to wolfforpa.com, volunteer. Make some phone calls. Knock on some doors. Grab people you know. The election is too important to leave it to somebody else. This is up to you. And you. Make a difference.

Listen, I know that the hardest thing in politics is changing a stubborn status quo. And to the young people here especially, I want to emphasize this. Sometimes, it seems like folks in power care more about power than they care about you. I know that. And you're fed information every day that says nothing is changing and everything is terrible. And when we do make progress, you don't hear about that. You hear about some conflict or phony controversy. And over time, you get cynical and you think, you know what, what I do doesn't make a difference. And so you don't get involved. You don't go out there and organize. Sometimes you don't even bother to vote.

And I'm just here to say, especially to the young people, don't buy that. Don't buy it. Because despite the cynics, America is making progress. This country always makes progress. Despite unyielding opposition, there are workers right now who have jobs who didn't have them before. There are families who have health insurance who didn't have them before. There are students who are going to college who couldn't afford it before. There are troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan with their families who weren't at home before.

Cynicism is sometimes passed off as wisdom. There's nothing wise about it. Cynicism didn't put a man on the Moon. Cynicism never started a business or cured a disease or fueled a young mind. Cynicism is a choice. And hope is a better choice.

Hope is what gave young people the courage to march for civil rights and voting rights and workers' rights and women's rights and immigrants' rights and gay rights. Hope is what built

this country: the belief that there are better days ahead, the belief that together, we can build up our middle class, that we can pass down something better for our kids. That's what built Pennsylvania. That's what built America, the belief that America's best days are still ahead.

You've got to believe it, and you've got to act on it. You've got to vote. And you've got to vote for Tom Wolf. And when you do, I guarantee you a better future for the people of Pennsylvania and the people of this country.

God bless you. God bless America. Let's get to work!

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:29 p.m. in the Liacouras Center at Temple University. In his remarks, he referred to Manan Trivedi, health policy consultant and part-time primary care physician, Pottstown Memorial Medical Center; Kevin Strouse, program director, Teach2Serve; State Rep. Brendan F. Boyle of Pennsylvania; and Gov. Scott K. Walker and State Sen. Glenn Grothman of Wisconsin.

The President's News Conference
November 5, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Have a seat.

Today I had a chance to speak with John Boehner and congratulated Mitch McConnell on becoming the next Senate Majority Leader. And I told them both that I look forward to finishing up this Congress's business and then working together for the next 2 years to advance America's business. And I very much appreciated Leader McConnell's words last night about the prospect of working together to deliver for the American people. On Friday, I look forward to hosting the entire Republican and Democratic leadership at the White House to chart a new course forward.

Obviously, Republicans had a good night, and they deserve credit for running good campaigns. Beyond that, I'll leave it to all of you and the professional pundits to pick through yesterday's results. What stands out to me, though, is that the American people sent a message, one that they've sent for several elections now. They expect the people they elect to work as hard as they do. They expect us to focus on their ambitions and not ours. They want us to get the job done.

All of us, in both parties, have a responsibility to address that sentiment. Still, as President, I have a unique responsibility to try and make this town work. So, to everyone who voted, I want you to know that I hear you. To the two-thirds of voters who chose not to participate in the process yesterday, I hear you too. All of us have to give more Americans a reason to feel like the ground is stable beneath their feet, that the future is secure, that there's a path for young people to succeed, and that folks here in Washington are concerned about them. So I plan on spending every moment of the next 2-plus years doing my job the best I can to keep this country safe and to make sure that more Americans share in its prosperity.

Now, this country has made real progress since the crisis 6 years ago. The fact is, more Americans are working; unemployment has come down. More Americans have health insurance. Manufacturing has grown. Our deficits have shrunk. Our dependence on foreign oil is down, as are gas prices. Our graduation rates are up. Our businesses aren't just creating jobs at the fastest pace since the 1990s, our economy is outpacing most of the world. But we've just got to keep at it until every American feels the gains of a growing economy where it matters most, and that's in their own lives.

Obviously, much of that will take action from Congress. And I'm eager to work with the new Congress to make the next 2 years as productive as possible. I am committed to making sure that I measure ideas not by whether they are from Democrats or Republicans, but whether they work for the American people. And that's not to say that we won't disagree over some issues that we're passionate about. We will. Congress will pass some bills I cannot

sign. I'm pretty sure I'll take some actions that some in Congress will not like. That's natural. That's how our democracy works. But we can surely find ways to work together on issues where there's broad agreement among the American people.

So I look forward to Republicans putting forward their governing agenda. I will offer my ideas on areas where I think we can move together to respond to people's economic needs.

So just take one example: We all agree on the need to create more jobs that pay well. Traditionally, both parties have been for creating jobs rebuilding our infrastructure: our roads, bridges, ports, waterways. I think we can hone in on a way to pay for it through tax reform that closes loopholes and makes it more attractive for companies to create jobs here in the United States.

We could also work together to grow our exports and open new markets for our manufacturers to sell more American-made goods to the rest of the world. And that's something I'll be focused on when I travel to Asia next week.

We all share the same aspirations for our young people. And I was encouraged that this year, Republicans agreed to investments that expanded early childhood education. I think we've got a chance to do more on that front. We've got some common ideas to help more young people afford college and graduate without crippling debt so that they have the freedom to fill the good jobs of tomorrow and buy their first homes and start a family.

And in the five States where a minimum wage increase was on the ballot last night, voters went five for five to increase it. And that will give about 325,000 Americans a raise in States where Republican candidates prevailed. So that should give us new reason to get it done for everybody, with a national increase in the minimum wage.

So those are some areas where I think we've got some real opportunities to cooperate. And I am very eager to hear Republican ideas for what they think we can do together over the next couple of years. Of course, there's still business on the docket that needs attention this year. And here are three places where I think we can work together over the next several weeks, before this Congress wraps up for the holidays.

First, I'm submitting a request to Congress for funding to ensure that our doctors, scientists, and troops have the resources that they need to combat the spread of Ebola in Africa and to increase our preparedness for any future cases here at home.

Second, I'm going to begin engaging Congress over a new Authorization to Use Military Force against ISIL. The world needs to know we are united behind this effort, and the men and women of our military deserve our clear and unified support.

Third, back in September, Congress passed short-term legislation to keep the Government open and operating into December. That gives Congress 5 weeks to pass a budget for the rest of the fiscal year. And I hope that they'll do it in the same bipartisan, drama-free way that they did earlier this year. When our companies are steadily creating jobs, which they are, we don't want to inject any new uncertainty into the world economy and to the American economy.

The point is, it's time for us to take care of business. There are things this country has to do that can't wait another 2 years or another 4 years. There are plans this country has to put in place for our future.

And the truth is, I'm optimistic about our future. I have good reason to be. I meet Americans all across the country who are determined and big-hearted and ask that—what they can do and never give up and overcome obstacles. And they inspire me every single day. So the fact is, I still believe in what I said when I was first elected 6 years ago last night. For all the maps plastered across our TV screens today, and for all the cynics who say otherwise, I continue to believe we are simply more than just a collection of red and blue States. We are the United States.

And whether it's immigration or climate change or making sure our kids are going to the best possible schools, to making sure that our communities are creating jobs; whether it's stopping the spread of terror and disease, to

opening up doors of opportunity to everybody who's willing to work hard and take responsibility, the United States has big things to do. We can and we will make progress if we do it together. And I look forward to the work ahead.

So with that, let me take some questions. I think that our team has got my list. And we're going to start with Julie Pace at Associated Press.

Midterm Elections/Bipartisanship/Minimum Wage/National Economy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Yes.

Q. You said during this election that while your name wasn't on the ballot, your policies were. And despite the optimism that you're expressing here, last night was a devastating night for your party. Given that, do you feel any responsibility to recalibrate your agenda for the next 2 years? And what changes do you need to make in your White House and in your dealings with Republicans in order to address the concerns that voters expressed with your administration?

The President. Well, as I said in my opening remarks, the American people overwhelmingly believe that this town doesn't work well and that it is not attentive to their needs. And as President, they rightly hold me accountable to do more to make it work properly. I'm the guy who's elected by everybody, not just from a particular State or a particular district. And they want me to push hard to close some of these divisions, break through some of the gridlock, and get stuff done. So the most important thing I can do is just get stuff done and help Congress get some things done.

In terms of agenda items, though, Julie, if you look, as I just mentioned, to a minimum wage increase, for example, that's something I talked about a lot during the campaign. Where voters had a chance to vote directly on that agenda item, they voted for it. And so I think it would be hard to suggest that people aren't supportive of it. We know that the surveys consistently say they want to see that happen.

The key is to find areas where the agenda that I've put forward, one that I believe will help strengthen the middle class and create more ladders of opportunity into the middle class and improve our schools and make college more affordable to more young people and make sure that we're growing faster as an economy and we stay competitive—the key is to make sure that those ideas that I have overlap somewhere with some of the ideas that Republicans have.

There's not going to be perfect overlap. I mean, there are going to be some ideas that I've got that, I think the evidence backs up, would be good for the economy, and Republicans disagree. They're not going to support those ideas. But I'm going to keep on arguing for them because I think they're the right thing for the country to do. There are going to be some ideas that they've got that they believe will improve the economy or create jobs that, from my perspective, isn't going to help middle class families improve their economic situation, so I probably won't support theirs.

But I do think there are going to be areas where we do agree: on infrastructure, on making sure that we're boosting American exports. And part of my task, then, is to reach out to Republicans, make sure that I'm listening to them. I'm looking forward to them putting forward a very specific agenda in terms of what they would like to accomplish. Let's compare notes in terms of what I'm looking at and what they're looking at, and let's get started on those things where we agree. Even if we don't agree 100 percent, let's get started on those things where we agree 70, 80, 90 percent. And if we can do that and build up some trust and improve how processes work in Washington, then I think that's going to give the American people a little bit more confidence that, in fact, their Government is looking after them.

Q. But is there anything specific that you feel like you and your administration need to change given this disastrous election for your party and the message that voters sent?

The President. Julie, I think every single day I'm looking for, how can we do what we need to do better. Whether that is delivering basic

services the Government provides to the American people, whether that is our capacity to work with Congress so that they're passing legislation, whether it's how we communicate with the American people about what our priorities and vision is, we are constantly asking ourselves questions about how do we make sure that we're doing a better job. And that's not going to stop. I think that every election is a moment for reflection, and I think that everybody in this White House is going to look and say, all right, what do we need to do differently?

But the principles that we're fighting for, the things that motivate me every single day and motivate my staff every day, those things aren't going to change. There's going to be a consistent focus on how do we deliver more opportunity to more people in this country, how do we grow the economy faster, how do we put more people back to work.

And I maybe have a naive confidence that if we continue to focus on the American people and not on our own ambitions or image or various concerns like that, that at the end of the day, when I look back, I'm going to be able to say the American people are better off than they were before I was President. And that's my most important goal.

So—but the other thing I just want to emphasize is I'm—I've said this before, I want to reiterate it: If there are ideas that the Republicans have that I have confidence will make things better for ordinary Americans, the fact that the Republicans suggesting it as opposed to a Democrat, that will be irrelevant to me. I want to just see what works.

And there are some things like rebuilding our infrastructure or early childhood education that we know works. And I'm hoping that the kind of attitude and approach that Mitch McConnell and John Boehner have already expressed, their desire to get things done, allows us to find some common ground.

Jeff Mason [Reuters].

Midterm Elections/Bipartisanship/Immigration Reform

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. In 2010, you called the result of the midterm election "a shellacking." What do you call this? And can you give us an update on your feelings about the immigration Executive order in the result—in the aftermath of this election? Does the election affect your plans to release it? Will it still—is it likely to come out before the lame duck session is over? And have you reduced its scope to just a couple million people?

The President. Well, as I said in my opening statement, there's no doubt that Republicans had a good night. And what we're going to make sure that we do is to reach out to Mitch McConnell and John Boehner, who are now running both Chambers in Congress, and find out what their agenda is. And my hope is, is that they've got some specific things they want to do that correspond with some things that we want to get done.

What's most important to the American people right now, the resounding message not just of this election, but basically, the last several is: Get stuff done. Don't worry about the next election. Don't worry about party affiliation. Do worry about our concerns. Worry about the fact that I'm a single mom and, at the end of the month, it's really hard for me to pay the bills, in part because I've got these huge childcare costs. Do worry about the fact that I'm a young person who's qualified to go to college, but I'm really worried about taking $50,000 a year out in debt, and I don't know how I'd pay that back. Do worry about the fact that I'm a construction worker who has been working all my life, and I know that there's construction work that should be done, but right now, for some reason, projects are stalled. If we're thinking about those folks, I think we're, hopefully, going to be able to get some stuff done.

In terms of immigration, I have consistently said that it is my profound preference and interest to see Congress act on a comprehensive immigration reform bill that would strengthen our borders; would streamline our legal immigration system so that it works better and we're attracting the best and the brightest from around the world; and that we give an opportunity for folks who've lived here, in many cases, for a very long time, may have kids who are

U.S. citizens, but aren't properly documented—give them a chance to pay their back taxes, get in the back of the line, but get through a process that allows them to get legal.

The Senate, on a bipartisan basis, passed a good bill. It wasn't perfect, it wasn't exactly what I wanted, but it was a sound, smart piece of legislation that really would greatly improve not just our immigration system, but our economy, and would improve business conditions here in the United States and make sure that American-born workers aren't undercut by workers who are undocumented and aren't always paid a fair wage, and as a consequence, employers who are breaking the rules are able to undercut folks who are doing the right thing.

So we got a bipartisan bill out of the Senate. I asked John Boehner at that point, can we pass this through the House? There's a majority of votes in the House to get this passed. And Speaker Boehner, I think, was sincere about wanting to pass it, but had difficulty over the last year trying to get it done.

So, when he finally told me he wasn't going to call it up this year, what I indicated to him is, I feel obliged to do everything I can lawfully with my executive authority to make sure that we don't keep on making the system worse, but that whatever executive actions that I take will be replaced and supplanted by action by Congress. You send me a bill that I can sign, and those executive actions go away.

That's a commitment I made not just to the American people and to businesses and the evangelical community and law enforcement folks and everybody who's looked at this issue and thinks that we need immigration reform; that's a commitment that I also made to John Boehner, that I would act in the absence of action by Congress.

So, before the end of the year, we're going to take whatever lawful actions that I can take that I believe will improve the functioning of our immigration system that will allow us to surge additional resources to the border, where I think the vast majority of Americans have the deepest concern. And at the same time, I'll be reaching out to both Mitch McConnell, John Boehner, and other Republican as well as Democratic leaders to find out how it is that they want to proceed. And if they want to get a bill done, whether it's during the lame duck or next year, I'm eager to see what they have to offer.

But what I'm not going to do is just wait. I think it's fair to say that I've shown a lot of patience and have tried to work on a bipartisan basis as much as possible, and I'm going to keep on doing so. But in the meantime, let's figure out what we can do lawfully through executive actions to improve the functioning of the existing system.

Q. How will you make sure that that executive action has teeth if Republicans try to block it by blocking funding? And can you give us a sense of whether or not you're thinking about 2 million or more million now?

The President. Jeff, I think if you want to get into the details of it, I suspect that when I announce that executive action, it will be rife with detail. [*Laughter*] And I'm sure there will be a lot of follow-up questions. [*Laughter*]

Chris Jansing [NBC News].

Midterm Elections/National Economy/Immigration Reform

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I want to follow up on a couple of things and start with immigration. And are you concerned that if you sign an Executive order on immigration before the end of the year it will scuttle whatever chances there may be for there to be some sort of compromise on the issues that you talked about? And I wonder that, given this unhappy electorate, clearly, and they seem to be disappointed with both sides pretty much, why they punished the Democrats more than the Republicans by far.

The President. Well, as I said, when it comes to the political analysis, that's your job. But what is also true is I am the President of the United States, and I think, understandably, people are going to ask for greater accountability and more responsibility from me than from anybody else in this town, appropriately so, and I welcome that. And the commitment that I will make to the American people and the way I've tried to conduct myself throughout this

Presidency is that I'm going to wake up every single day doing my absolute best to deliver for them.

And there are areas where we've made real progress. I think, economically, I can look back and there is no doubt that almost—on almost every measure, we are better off economically than we were when I took office. But what is also true is, there are still a lot of folks out there who are anxious and are hurting and are having trouble making ends meet or are worried about their children's future. And it's my job to give them some confidence that this town can work to respond to some of those worries that folks have.

And we haven't done a good enough job convincing them of that. And I understand that. If they've been watching Washington over the last 2, 4 years, what they've seen is a lot of arguing and a lot of gridlock, but not a lot of concrete actions, at least legislatively, that have made a difference in their lives. And so we've got to make sure that we do a better job, and I'm committed to doing that.

On immigration, I know that concerns have been expressed that, well, if you do something through executive actions, even if it's within your own authorities, that that will make it harder to pass immigration reform. I just have to remind everybody, I've heard that argument now for a couple of years. This is an issue I actually wanted to get done in my first term, and we didn't see legislative action. And in my second term, I made it my top legislative priority; we got really good work done by a bipartisan group of Senators, but it froze up in the House.

And I think that the best way, if folks are serious about getting immigration reform done, is going ahead and passing a bill and getting it to my desk. And then the executive actions that I take go away. They're superseded by the law that has passed.

And I will engage any Member of Congress who's interested in this in how we can shape legislation that will be a significant improvement over the existing system. But what we can't do is just keep on waiting. There is a cost to waiting. There's a cost to our economy. It means that resources are misallocated.

When the issue of unaccompanied children cropped up during this summer, there was a lot of folks who perceived this as a major crisis in our immigration system. Now, the fact is, is that those numbers have now come down, and they're approximately where they were a year ago or 2 years ago or a year before that. But it did identify a real problem in a certain portion of the border where we've got to get more resources.

But those resources may be misallocated, separating families right now that most of us, most Americans would say, probably, we'd rather have them just pay their back taxes, pay a fine, learn English, get to the back of the line, but we'll give you a pathway where you can be legal in this country.

So, where I've got executive authorities to do that, we should get started on that. But I want to emphasize once again, if in fact Republican leadership wants to see an immigration bill passed, they now have the capacity to pass it. And hopefully, engaging with me and Democrats in both the House and the Senate, it's a bill that I can sign because it addresses the real concerns that are out there. And the sooner they do it, from my perspective, the better.

Jonathan Karl [ABC News].

President's Relations With Congress/Bipartisanship/Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mitch McConnell has been the Republican Leader for 6 years, as long as you've been President. But his office tells me that he has only met with you one-on-one once or twice during that entire 6-year period. So I'm wondering, as somebody who came to Washington promising to end the hyperpartisanship that was here long before you became President, but it's gotten worse since you got here, was it a mistake for you to do so little to develop relationships with Republicans in Congress?

The President. I think that every day, I'm asking myself, are there some things I can do better. And I'm going to keep on asking that every single day. The fact is that most of my in-

teractions with Members of Congress have been cordial and they've been constructive. Oftentimes, though, we just haven't been able to actually get what's discussed in a leadership meeting through caucuses in the House and the Senate to deliver a bill.

The good news is that now Mitch McConnell and John Boehner are from the same party; I think they can come together and decide what their agenda is. They've got sufficient majorities to make real progress on some of these issues. And I'm certainly going to be spending a lot more time with them now because that's the only way that we're going to be able to get some stuff done.

And I take them at their word that they want to produce. They're in the majority; they need to present their agenda. I need to put forward my best ideas. I think the American people are going to be able to watch us, and they're paying attention to see whether or not we're serious about actually compromising and being constructive. And my commitment to them—and I've said this when I spoke to them—is, is that anywhere where we can find common ground, I'm eager to pursue it.

Q. Are you going to have that drink with Mitch McConnell now that you joked about at the White House Correspondents Dinner?

The President. You know, actually, I would enjoy having some Kentucky bourbon with Mitch McConnell. [*Laughter*] I don't know what his preferred drink is, but—my interactions with Mitch McConnell, he has always been very straightforward with me. To his credit, he has never made a promise that he couldn't deliver. And he knows the legislative process well. He obviously knows his caucus well. He has always given me, I think, realistic assessments of what he can get through his caucus and what he can't. And so I think we can have a productive relationship.

Phil Mattingly [Bloomberg Television].

Congressional Authorization for Use of Military Force/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Another deadline coming up is on—your negotiators by November 24 have to figure out if they're going to reach a deal with Iran on a nuclear area—a nuclear agreement. I'm interested what your current perspective is on how those negotiations are going. Also, if it is your feeling that you have the power to implement any type of agreement that's reached without any action from Congress? And then, also, I just wanted to quickly touch on the AUMF that you mentioned earlier. Is that going to be more of a codification of the limits that you've put in place for the mission up to this point? Or what should we be looking for on that when you send it to the Hill? Thank you.

The President. On the AUMF, the leaders are going to be coming here on Friday. It will be an expanded group, not just the four leaders, but a larger group who all have an interest in the issues we're discussing today. And I'm actually going to invite Lloyd Austin, the CENTCOM commander, to make a presentation about how our fight against ISIL is proceeding and, I think, to answer questions and assure that Congress is fully briefed on what we're doing there.

With respect to the AUMF, we've already had conversations with members of both parties in Congress, and the idea is to right-size and update whatever authorization Congress provides to suit the current fight, rather than previous fights.

In 2001, after the heartbreaking tragedy of 9/11, we had a very specific set of missions that we had to conduct, and the AUMF was designed to pursue those missions. With respect to Iraq, there was a very specific AUMF.

We now have a different type of enemy. The strategy is different. How we partner with Iraq and other Gulf countries and the international coalition, that has to be structured differently. So it makes sense for us to make sure that the authorization from Congress reflects what we perceive to be not just our strategy over the next 2 or 3 months, but our strategy going forward.

And it will be a process of listening to Members of Congress, as well as us presenting what we think needs to be the set of authorities that we have. And I'm confident we're going to be

able to get that done. And that may just be a process of us getting it started now. It may carry over into the next Congress.

On Iran, because of the unprecedented sanctions that we put in place that really did have a crippling effect on Iran's economy, they've come to the table, and they've negotiated seriously around providing assurances that they're not developing a nuclear weapon for the first time. And they have abided by the interim rules. We have been able to freeze their program, in some cases, reduce the stockpile of nuclear material that they already had in hand. And the discussions, the negotiations have been constructive.

The international community has been unified and cohesive. There haven't been a lot of cracks in our alliance. Even countries where we have some differences, like Russia, have agreed with us and have worked with us cooperatively in trying to find ways to make sure that we can verify and have confidence going forward that Iran doesn't have the capacity to develop a nuclear weapon that could not only threaten friends of ours like Israel, trigger a nuclear arms race in the region, but could over the long term, potentially threaten us.

Whether we can actually get a deal done, we're going to have to find out over the next 3 to 4 weeks. We have presented to them a framework that would allow them to meet their peaceful energy needs. And if in fact what their leadership says, that they don't want to develop a nuclear a weapon, if that is in fact true, then they've got an avenue here to provide that assurance to the world community and in a progressive, step-by-step, verifiable way, allow them to get out from under sanctions so that they can reenter as full-fledged members of the international community.

But they have their own politics, and there is a long tradition of mistrust between the two countries. And there's a sizeable portion of the political elite that cut its teeth on anti-Americanism and still finds it convenient to blame America for every ill that there is. And whether they can manage to say yes to what clearly would be better for Iran, better for the region, and better for the world, is an open question. We'll find out over the next several weeks. All right?

Q. Sir, if the—on whether or not you have the power unilaterally to relax sanctions to implement an agreement?

The President. Yes. There are a series of different sanctions. There are multilateral sanctions; there are U.N. sanctions; there are sanctions that have been imposed by us, this administration, unilaterally. And I think it's different for each of those areas.

But it—I don't want to put the cart before the horse. What I want to do is see if we in fact have a deal. If we do have a deal that I have confidence will prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon and that we can convince the world and the public will prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, then it will be time to engage in Congress. And I think that we'll be able to make a strong argument to Congress that this is the best way for us to avoid a nuclear Iran, that it will be more effective than any other alternatives we might take, including military action.

But that requires it being a good deal. And I've said consistently that I'd rather have no deal than a bad deal, because what we don't want to do is lift sanctions and provide Iran legitimacy, but not have the verifiable mechanisms to make sure that they don't break out and produce a nuclear weapon. Okay?

Ed Henry [Fox News]. I missed you guys. I haven't done this in a while. [*Laughter*]

U.S. Strategy To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Syria/Midterm Elections/Bipartisanship

Q. I know. I've missed you. [*Laughter*] Thank you, Mr. President. I haven't heard you say a specific thing during this news conference that you would do differently. You've been asked it a few different ways. I understand you're going to reach out, but you've talked about doing that before. It's almost like you're doubling down on the same policies and approach you've had for 6 years. And so my question is, why not pull a page from the Clinton playbook and admit you have to make a

much more dramatic shift in course for these last 2 years?

And on ISIS, there was pretty dramatic setback in the last few days, with it appearing that the Syrian rebels have been routed. There are some Gitmo detainees who have rejoined the battlefield, helping ISIS and other terror groups, is what the reports are suggesting. So my question is, are we winning?

The President. Yes, I—well, I think it's too early to say whether we are winning, because as I said at the outset of the ISIL campaign, this is going to be a long-term plan to solidify the Iraqi Government, to solidify their security forces, to make sure that in addition to our air cover, that they have the capacity to run a ground game that pushes ISIL back from some of the territories that they had taken, that we have a strong international coalition that we've now built, but that they are on the ground providing the training, providing the equipment, providing the supplies that are necessary for Iraqis to fight on behalf of their territory.

And what I also said was that in Syria, that's been complicated, and that's not going to be solved any time soon. Our focus in Syria is not to solve the entire Syria situation, but rather to isolate the areas in which ISIL can operate. And there is no doubt that because of the extraordinary bravery of our men and women in uniform and the precision of our pilots and the strikes that have taken place, that ISIL is in a more vulnerable position and it is more difficult for them to maneuver than it was previously.

Now, there's a specific issue about trying to get a moderate opposition in Syria that can serve as a partner with us on the ground. That's always been the hardest piece of business to get done. There are a lot of opposition groups in Syria along a spectrum from radical jihadists who are our enemies to folks who believe in inclusive democracy and everything in between. They fight among each other. They are fighting the regime.

And what we're trying to do is to find a core group that we can work with that we have confidence in, that we've vetted, that can help in regaining territory from ISIL, and then ultimately serve as a responsible party to sit at the table in eventual political negotiations that are probably some ways off in the future.

That's always been difficult. As you know, one of the debates has consistently been, should the Obama administration provide more support to the opposition? Could that have averted some of the problems that are taking place in Syria? And as I've said before, part of the challenge is, it's a messy situation. This is not a situation where we have one single unified, broad-based, effective, reliable——

Q. ——the idea that maybe we have to have leadership——

The President. [*Laughter*] Let me answer the question, Ed. And so what we are going to continue to test is, can we get a more stable, effective, cohesive, moderate opposition?

But that's not the sole measure of whether we are "winning" or not. Remember, our first focus, Ed, here is to drive ISIL out of Iraq. And what we're doing in Syria is, first and foremost, in service of reducing ISIL's capacity to resupply and send troops and then run back in over the Syrian border; to eventually reestablish a border between Iraq and Syria so that slowly, Iraq regains control of its security and its territory. That is our number-one mission. That is our number-one focus.

There are aspects of what's going on in Syria that we've got to deal with in order to reduce the scope of ISIL's operations. So, for example, our support for Kurds in Kobani, where they've been able to hold off ISIL and where we've been able to effectively strike ISIL positions consistently, that's not just because we're trying to solve a Syria problem. That's also because it gives us an opportunity to further weaken ISIL so that we can meet our number-one mission, which is Iraq.

In terms of things to do differently, I guess, Ed, your—the question you're asking is one actually I think I have answered. If you're asking about personnel or if you're asking about position on issues or what have you, then it's probably premature because I want to hear what——

Q. Your leadership, your leadership. Is there something about your leadership—[*inaudible*]—is my question.

The President. Ed, what I'd like to do is to hear from the Republicans to find out what it is that they would like to see happen. And what I'm committing to is making sure that I am open to working with them on the issues that—where they think that there's going to be cooperation.

Now, that isn't a change, because I've suggested to them before that where they think there's areas of cooperation, I'd like to see us get some things done. But the fact that they now control both Chambers of Congress, I think, means that perhaps they have more confidence that they can pass their agenda and get a bill on my desk. It means that negotiations end up perhaps being a little more real because they have larger majorities, for example, in the House, and they may be able to get some things through their caucuses that they couldn't before.

But the bottom line that the American people want to know and that I'm going to repeat here today is that my number-one goal—because I'm not running again, I'm not on the ballot, I don't have any further political aspirations—my number-one goal is just to deliver as much as I can for the American people in these last 2 years. And wherever I see an opportunity, no matter how large or how small, to make it a little bit easier for a kid to go to college, make it a little more likely that somebody is finding a good-paying job, make it a little more likely that somebody has high-quality health care, even if I'm not getting a whole loaf, I'm interested in getting whatever legislation we can get passed that adds up to improved prospects and an improved future for the American people.

Sam Stein [Huffington Post].

Selection Process To Replace Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr./Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Following the elections, congressional Republicans are pushing once again for major reforms to your health care act.

The President. Yes.

Q. In the past, you've said you're open to good ideas, but you don't want to undermine the bill. Can you tell us what specific ideas you're ruling out? Have the election results changed your calculus on reforming the law? And how confident are you heading into the second enrollment period? And on a totally unrelated matter—[*laughter*]—have you settled on a nominee to replace Attorney General Eric Holder, and if so, who is it? [*Laughter*]

The President. You guys want to spread out your news a little bit, don't you? You don't want it all in just one big bang. The—[*laughter*].

On the Attorney General, we have a number of outstanding candidates who we're taking a look at now, and in due course I will have an announcement. And you'll be there, Sam, when that's announced. [*Laughter*] But I'm confident that we'll find somebody who is well qualified, will elicit the confidence of the American people, will uphold their constitutional obligations and rule of law, and will get confirmed by the Senate.

On health care, there are certainly some lines I'm going to draw. Repeal of the law I won't sign. Efforts that would take away health care from the 10 million people who now have it and the millions more who are eligible to get it we're not going to support. In some cases, there may be recommendations that Republicans have for changes that would undermine the structure of the law, and I'll be very honest with them about that and say, look, the law doesn't work if you pull out that piece or that piece.

On the other hand, what I have said is there's no law that's ever been passed that is perfect. And given the contentious nature in which it was passed in the first place, there are places where, if I were just drafting a bill on our own, we would have made those changes back then, and certainly, as we've been implementing, there are some other areas where we think we can do even better.

So, if in fact one of the items on Mitch McConnell's agenda and John Boehner's agenda is to make responsible changes to the Affordable Care Act to make it work better, I'm going to be very open and receptive to hearing those

ideas. But what I will remind them is that despite all the contention, we now know that the law works. You've got millions of people who have health insurance who didn't have it before. You've got States that have expanded Medicaid to folks who did not have it before, including Republican Governors who've concluded, this is a good deal for their State.

And despite some of the previous predictions, even as we've enrolled more people into the Affordable Care Act and given more people the security of health insurance, health care inflation has gone done every single year since the law passed, so that we now have the lowest increase in health care costs in 50 years, which is saving us about $180 billion in reduced overall costs to the Federal Government in its—in the Medicare program.

So we are I think really proud of the work that's been done. But there's no doubt that there are areas where we can improve it. So I'll look forward to seeing what list they've got of improvements.

Q. Is the individual mandate one of those lines you can't cross?

The President. Yes, the individual mandate is a line I can't cross because the concept, borrowed from Massachusetts, from a law instituted by a former opponent of mine, Mitt Romney, understood that if you're providing health insurance to people through the private marketplace, then you've got to make sure that people can't game the system and just wait until they get sick before they go try to buy health insurance. You can't ensure that people with preexisting conditions can get health insurance unless you also say, while you're healthy, before you need it, you've got to get health insurance.

And obviously, there are hardship exemptions. We understand that there are some folks who, even with the generous subsidies that have been provided, still can't afford it. But that's a central component of the law.

In terms of enrollment, we'll do some additional announcements about that in the days to come. Starting in the middle of this month, people can sign up again. I think there are a number of people who the first time around sat on the sidelines in part because of our screw-ups on healthcare.gov.

That's one area, Ed, by the way, that's very particular. We're really making sure the website works super well before the next open enrollment period. [*Laughter*] We're double- and triple-checking it. And so I think a lot of people who maybe initially thought, we're not sure how this works, let's wait and see—they're going to have an opportunity now to sign up. And what's been terrific is to see how more private insurers have come into the marketplace so that there's greater competition in more markets all around the country. The premiums that have come in that are available to people and the choices that are available are better than a lot of people, I think, had predicted.

So the law is working. That doesn't mean it can't be improved.

Major Garrett. [CBS News]

Immigration Reform/Keystone XL Pipeline Project/Domestic Energy Production/Tax Reform/Infrastructure

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. And if you do miss us, allow me to humbly suggest we do this every week. [*Laughter*]

The President. We might. Who knows? [*Laughter*] I'm having a great time.

Q. All right. Let me go back to immigration. Moments before you walked out here, sir, Mitch McConnell said, and I quote, that if you in fact use your executive authority to legalize a certain number of millions of undocumented workers, it would "poison the well"—direct quote—and it would be "like waving a red flag in front of a bull." Do you not believe that is the considered opinion of the new Republican majority in the House and Senate? And do you also not believe what they have said in the aftermath of last night's results, that the verdict rendered by voters should stop you or should prevent you from taking this action because it was a subtext in many of the campaigns?

The President. Yes.

Q. Let me ask you a couple of specifics. Republicans haven't made a mystery about some of the things they intend to say——

The President. Hold—do I have to write all of these down? [*Laughter*]

Q. You're very well familiar with these. These will not be mysteries to you.

The President. No, but I——

Q. Keystone XL pipeline.

The President. All right.

Q. They will send you legislation on that. They will ask you to repeal the medical device tax as a part of a funding mechanism of the Affordable Care Act. And they have said they would like to repatriate some maybe $2 trillion of offshore revenue at the corporate level by reforming the corporate Tax Code without touching the individual Tax Code. To use your words, Mr. President, are any of those three lines you cannot cross? And also deal with what you perceive to be Republican attitudes about immigration.

The President. All right. I think, Major, that I answered the question on immigration. I have no doubt that there will be some Republicans who are angered or frustrated by any executive action that I may take. Those are folks, I just have to say, who are also deeply opposed to immigration reform in any form and blocked the House from being able to pass a bipartisan bill.

I have said before that I actually believe that John Boehner is sincere about wanting to get immigration reform passed, which is why for a year, I held off taking any action beyond what we had already done for the so-called DREAM kids and did everything I could to give him space and room to get something done. And what I also said at the time was, if in fact Congress—if this Congress—could not get something done, then I would take further executive actions in order to make the system work better, understanding that any bill that they pass will supplant the executive actions that I take.

So I just want to reemphasize this, Major: If in fact there is a great eagerness on the part of Republicans to tackle a broken immigration system, then they have every opportunity to do it. My executive actions not only do not prevent them from passing a law that supersedes those actions, but should be a spur for them to actually try to get something done. And I am prepared to engage them every step of the way with their ideas.

I think we should have further broad-based debate among the American people. As I've said before, I do think that the episode with the unaccompanied children changed a lot of attitudes. I think what may also change a lot of attitudes is when the public now realizes that that was a very temporary and isolated event and that in fact we have fewer illegal immigrants coming in today than we did 5 years ago, 10 years ago, or 20 years go, but that what we also have is a system that is not serving our economy well. So——

Q. Do you agree with Republicans who say the election was a referendum, at least in part, on your intentions to use executive authority for immigration?

The President. As I said before, I don't want to try to read the tea leaves on election results. What I am going to try to do as President is to make sure that I'm advancing what I think is best for the country. And here's an opportunity where I can use my administrative authorities, executive authorities, and lawfully try to make improvements on the existing system, understanding that that's not going to fix the entire problem and we're much better off if we go ahead and pass a comprehensive bill. And I hope that the Republicans really want to get it passed. If they do, they're going to have a lot of cooperation from me.

So let me just tick off: On Keystone, there's an independent process. It's moving forward. And the—I'm going to let that process play out. I've given some parameters in terms of how I think about it: Ultimately, is this going to be good for the American people? Is it going to be good for their pocketbook? Is it going to actually create jobs? Is it actually going to reduce gas prices that have been coming down? And is it going to be, on net, something that doesn't increase climate change that we're going to have to grapple with?

There's a pending case before a Nebraska judge about some of the siting. The process is moving forward, and I'm just going to gather up the facts.

I will note, while this debate about Canadian oil has been raging—keep in mind this is Canadian oil, this isn't U.S. oil—while that debate has been raging, we've seen the—some of the biggest increases in American oil production and American natural gas production in our history. We are closer to energy independence than we've ever been before or at least as we've been in decades. We are importing less foreign oil than we produce for the first time in a very long time. We've got a hundred-year supply of natural gas that, if we responsibly tap, puts us in the strongest position when it comes to energy of any industrialized country around the world.

If you—when I travel to Asia or I travel to Europe, their biggest envy is the incredible homegrown U.S. energy production that is producing jobs and attracting manufacturing, because locating here means you've got lower energy costs.

So our energy sector is booming. And I'm happy to engage Republicans with additional ideas for how we can enhance that. I should note that our clean energy production is booming as well. And so Keystone I just consider as one small aspect of a broader trend that's really positive for the American people.

And let's see—see, the—okay, medical device tax. I've already answered the question. We are going to take a look at whatever ideas—let me take a look comprehensively at the ideas that they present. Let's give them time to tell me. I'd rather hear it from them than from you.

Q. For example——

The President. Major——

Q. I'm just telling you what they said.

The President. Conceivably, I could just cancel my meeting on Friday because I've heard everything from you. [*Laughter*] I think I'd rather let Mitch McConnell——

Q. I just asked if it was a line you couldn't cross. That's all.

The President. I'd rather hear from Mitch McConnell and John Boehner what ideas they'd like to pursue, and we'll have a conversation with them on that.

On repatriation, I said in my opening remarks that there is an opportunity for us to do a tax reform package that is good for business, good for jobs, and can potentially finance infrastructure development here in the United States.

Now, the devil is in the details. So I think, conceptually, it's something where we may have some overlap, and I'm very interested in pursuing ideas that can put folks to work right now on roads and bridges and waterways and ports and a better air traffic control system. If we had one, by the way, we would reduce delays by about 30 percent. We could reduce fuel costs for airlines by about 30 percent. And hopefully, that would translate into cheaper airline tickets, which I know everybody would be interested in.

So there's all kind of work we can do on our infrastructure. This may be one mechanism that Republicans are comfortable in financing those kinds of efforts. So that will be part of the discussion that I think we're prepared for on Friday and then in the weeks to come leading into the new Congress.

Whew! Major works me, man. [*Laughter*]

Jim Acosta [CNN].

Midterm Elections/President's Agenda During Final Years in Office/President's Role in 2014 Electoral Campaign

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I know you don't want to read the tea leaves, but it is a fact that your party rejected you in these midterms.

The President. [*Laughter*] Yes.

Q. By and large, they did not want you out on the campaign trail in these key battleground States. How do you account for that? And your aides have said that this is the fourth quarter of your administration, but I don't know if you saw the morning talk shows, but there were several potential candidates for 2016 who are out there already. Is the clock ticking? Are you running out of time? How much time do you have left? And what do you make of the notion that you're now a lame duck?

The President. Well, traditionally, after the last midterm of a two-term Presidency, since I

can't run again, that's the label that you guys apply. [*Laughter*]

Here's what I tell my team. I told them this last week, and I told them this this morning: We had this incredible privilege of being in charge of the most important organization on Earth, the U.S. Government and our military and everything that we do for good around the world.

And there's a lot of work to be done to make Government work better, to make Americans safer, to make opportunity available to more people, for us to be able to have a positive influence in every corner of the globe, the way we're doing right now in West Africa. And I'm going to squeeze every last little bit of opportunity to help make this world a better place over these last 2 years.

And some of that is going to be what we can do administratively and simple things like how do we make customer service better in every agency. Are there things that we can do to streamline how our veterans access care? Are there better ways that we can make businesses understand the programs that are available to them to promote their business or exports?

So there's a whole bunch of stuff to do on that front. And as I said before, there's going to be opportunities to work with Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill to get laws done. And if you look at the history of almost every President, those last 2 years, all kinds of stuff happens, in some cases, stuff that we couldn't predict.

So the one thing I'm pretty confident about, Jim, is I'm going to be busy for the next 2 years. And the one thing that I want the American people to be confident about is that every day I'm going to be filling up my time trying to figure out how I can make their lives better. And if I'm doing that, at the end of my Presidency, I'll say, we played that fourth quarter well, and we played the game well.

And the only difference between, I guess, basketball and politics is that the only score that matters is how did somebody else do, not how you did. And that's the score I'm keeping. Am I going to be able to look back and say, are more people working? Are their bank accounts better? Are more kids going to college? Is housing improved? Is the financial system more stable? Are younger kids getting a better education? Do we have greater energy independence? Is the environment cleaner? Have we done something about climate change? Have we dealt with an ongoing terrorist threat and helped to bring about stability around the world? And those things—every single day, I've got an opportunity to make a difference on those fronts, which is——

Q. And you're not satisfied with where you are now?

The President. Absolutely not. I wouldn't be satisfied as long as I'm meeting somebody who has a—doesn't have a job and wants one. I'm not going to be satisfied as long as there's a kid who writes me a letter and says, "I've got $60,000 worth of debt, and I don't know how to pay it back." And the American people aren't satisfied. So I want to do everything I can to deliver for them.

Q. And how about Democrats, the fact that they kept you out of these battleground States? Does that, kind of, bug you a little bit?

The President. Listen, I—as I think some of you saw when I was out on the campaign trail, I love campaigning. I love talking to ordinary people. I love listening to their stories. I love shaking hands and getting hugs and just seeing the process of democracy and citizenship manifest itself during an election.

But I'm also a practical guy. And ultimately, every candidate out there had to make their own decisions about what they thought would be most helpful for them. And I wanted to make sure that I'm respectful of their particular region, their particular State or congressional district, and if it was more helpful for them for me to be behind the scenes, I'm happy to do it. I don't have——

Q. You don't think it was a mistake?

The President. I'll let other people analyze that. But what I will emphasize is that one of the nice things about being in the sixth year of your Presidency is, you've seen a lot of ups and downs and you've gotten more than your fair share of attention. And I've had the limelight, and I've—there have been times where the re-

quest for my appearances were endless. There have been times where, politically, we were down. And it all kind of evens out, which is why what's most important, I think, is keeping your eye on the ball, and that is, are you actually getting some good done?

Scott Horsley [NPR], last question.

The President's Communication With the Electorate/Voter Participation in Political Process

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You mentioned that where your policies actually were on the ballot, they often did better than members of your party.

The President. Yes.

Q. Does that signal some shortcoming on your part or on the party's part in framing this election and communicating to the American people what it is that Democrats stand for?

The President. I do think that one area where I know we're constantly experimenting and trying to do better is just making sure that people know exactly what it is that we're trying to accomplish and what we have accomplished in clear ways that people can—that understand how it affects them. And I think the minimum wage I talked about a lot on the campaign trail, but I'm not sure it penetrated well enough to make a difference.

Part of what I also think we've got to look at is that two-thirds of people who were eligible to vote and just didn't vote. One of the things that I'm very proud of in 2008 and 2012 when I ran for office was, we got people involved who hadn't been involved before. We got folks to vote who hadn't voted before, particularly young people.

And that was part of the promise, and the excitement was, if you get involved, if you participate, if you embrace that sense of citizenship, then things change—and not just in abstract ways, they change in concrete ways. Somebody gets a job who didn't have it before. Somebody gets health care who didn't have it before. Or a student is able to go to college who couldn't afford it before. And sustaining that, especially in midterm's elections, has proven difficult; sustaining that sense of, if you get involved, then—and if you vote, then there is going to be big change out there. And partly, I think, when they look at Washington, they say, "Nothing is working, and it's not making a difference," and there's just a constant slew of bad news coming over the TV screen, then you can understand how folks would get discouraged.

But it's my job to figure this out as best I can. And if the way we are talking about issues isn't working, then I'm going to try some different things. If the ways that we're approaching the Republicans in Congress isn't working, I'm going to try different things—whether it's having a drink with Mitch McConnell or letting John Boehner beat me again at golf or what——

Q. Weekly press conferences.

Q. Or weekly press conferences, I don't know if that would be effective. [*Laughter*] Whatever I think might make a difference in this, I'm going to be trying out up until my last day in office.

But I'll close with what I said in my opening statement. I am really optimistic about America. I know that runs counter to the current mood, but when you look at the facts, our economy is stronger than just about anybody's. Our energy production is better than just about anybody's. We've slashed our deficit by more than half. More people have health insurance. Our businesses have the strongest balance sheets that they've had in decades. Our young people are just incredibly talented and gifted, and more of them are graduating from high school, and more of them are going on to college, and more women are getting degrees and entering into the workforce.

And what—part of the reason I love campaigning is, you travel around the country, folks are just good. They're smart, and they're hard working. And they're not always paying a lot of attention to Washington, and in some cases, they've given up on Washington. But their impulses are not sharply partisan, and their impulses are not ideological. They're really practical, good, generous people.

So—and we continue to be a magnet for the best and brightest from all around the world. We have all the best cards relative to every

other country on Earth. Our Armed Forces, you talk to them—I had a chance this morning to just call some of the—our health service that is operating in Liberia, and the amount of hope and professionalism that they've brought has galvanized the entire country, and has built—they've built a platform effectively for other countries suddenly to start coming in. And we're seeing real progress in fighting the disease in a country that just a month or a month and a half ago was desperate and had no hope.

So all that makes me optimistic. And my job over the next couple of years is to do some practical, concrete things—as much as possible with Congress; where it's not possible with Congress, on my own—to show people why we should be confident and to give people a sense of progress and a sense of hope.

That doesn't mean there aren't going to be ongoing nagging problems that are stubborn and can't be solved overnight. And probably the biggest one is the fact that despite economic growth, wages and income have still not gone up. And that's a long-term trend that we've seen for 10, 20, 30 years. And it makes people worried about not just their own situation, but whether their kids are going to be doing better than they did, which is the essence of the American Dream. I think there are some concrete things we can do to make sure that wages and incomes do go up. Minimum wage in those five States was a good start.

But I think more than anything what I want to communicate over these next 2 years is the promise and possibility of America. This is just an extraordinary country. And our democracy is messy. And we're diverse, and we're big. And there are times where you're a politician and you're disappointed with election results. But maybe I'm just getting older, I don't know. It doesn't make me mopey. It energizes me because it means that this democracy is working. And people in America were restless and impatient, and we want to get things done. And even when things are going good, we want them to do better. And that's why this is the greatest country on Earth. That's why I'm so privileged to have a chance to be President for the next couple years.

All right? Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:57 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid; House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi; 2012 Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; and Stephanie F. Stacy, district judge, Lancaster County, NE. A reporter referred to former President William J. Clinton.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting an Emergency Appropriations Request for Fiscal Year 2015 To Implement a Comprehensive Ebola Containment, Preparedness, and Prevention Strategy

November 5, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Today, I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed emergency appropriations request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 that includes $6.18 billion to implement a comprehensive strategy to contain and end the Ebola outbreak at its source in Africa, enhance domestic preparedness, speed the procurement and testing of vaccines and therapeutics, and accelerate global capability to prevent the spread of future infectious diseases.

The request includes $4.64 billion for immediate needs and $1.54 billion in contingency funding to ensure that there are resources available to respond to the evolving epidemic both domestically and internationally. This funding structure was used by the Congress in 2009 for the emergency supplemental for the H1N1 pandemic influenza.

My foremost priority is to protect the health and safety of Americans, and this request supports all necessary steps to fortify our domestic health system and prevent any outbreaks at

home. Over the longer term, my Administration recognizes that the best way to prevent additional cases at home will be to contain and eliminate the epidemic at its source in Africa.

Specifically, the request includes resources for domestic hospital and State and local preparedness; resources to support training as well as the acquisition of appropriate protective equipment; medical and non-medical management of Ebola treatment units and community care centers; infection control; contact tracing; laboratory capacity; disease surveillance; emergency operation centers; education and outreach; burial teams; addressing food insecurity and other adverse impacts of the outbreak in affected areas; and testing and development of new vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics.

The request also includes resources to strengthen global health security by reducing risks to Americans by enhancing the capacity of vulnerable countries to prevent disease outbreaks, detect them early, and swiftly respond before they become epidemics that threaten our national security. The Global Health Security Agenda will accelerate and expand international capabilities to deter infectious disease threats like Ebola, by: standing up emergency operations centers; providing equipment and training needed to test patients and report data in real-time; providing safe and secure laboratory capacity; and developing a trained workforce to track and end outbreaks before they become epidemics. These are the same activities that are necessary to combat the spread of Ebola and reduce the potential for future outbreaks of infectious diseases that could follow a similarly devastating, costly, and destabilizing trajectory.

My Administration requests that the funding described above be designated as emergency requirements pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

I urge the Congress to act expeditiously in considering this important request, the details of which are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks on Presenting Posthumously the Medal of Honor to First Lieutenant Alonzo H. Cushing

November 6, 2014

Please, everyone, have a seat. Well, on behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House. One hundred fifty-one years ago, as our country struggled for its survival, President Lincoln dedicated the battlefield at Gettysburg as "a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live." Today the Nation that lived pauses to pay tribute to one of those who died there: to bestow the Medal of Honor, our highest military decoration, upon First Lieutenant Alonzo H. Cushing.

Now, typically, this medal must be awarded within a few years of the action. But sometimes, even the most extraordinary stories can get lost in the passage of time. So I want to thank the more than two dozen family members of Lieutenant Cushing who are here, including his cousin, twice removed, Helen Loring Ensign, from Palm Desert, California, who will accept this medal. For this American family, this story isn't some piece of obscure history, it is an integral part of who they are. And today our whole Nation shares their pride and celebrates what this story says about who we are.

This award would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of supporters who worked for decades to make this day a reality. And I want to especially acknowledge Margaret Zerwekh, who is a historian from Delafield, Wisconsin, where Lieutenant Cushing was born. And there's Margaret back there. [*Laughter*] Good to see you, Margaret. Margaret is also

the granddaughter of a Union veteran and lives on a property that was once owned by Cushing's father. When she discovered this story, she spent over 25 years researching, writing letters, and raising her voice to ensure that this American soldier received the recognition that he so richly he deserved. And what's more, she even managed to bring Republicans and Democrats together—[*laughter*]—to make this happen. Margaret, we may call on you again sometime in the next several months. [*Laughter*]

Yet this medal is about more than just one soldier or one family. It reflects our obligations as a country to the men and women in our Armed Services, obligations that continue long after they return home, after they've removed their uniforms, and even—perhaps especially—after they've laid down their lives. And so this medal is a reminder that no matter how long it takes, it is never too late to do the right thing.

Alonzo, or "Lon," Cushing was raised by his widowed mother in Fredonia, New York, with his siblings, including three brothers who also fought for the Union. As the Congressman who recommended Lon to West Point wrote, "His mother is poor, but highly committed, and her son will do honor to the position." After graduating from West Point, Lon was assigned to Battery A, Fourth United States Artillery. From Bull Run to Antietam, from Chancellorsville to Fredericksburg, Lon fought bravely and developed a reputation for his cool, his competence, and his courage under fire.

But it was at Gettysburg, what one newspaper later called "emphatically a soldiers' battle," where Lon would be immortalized. It was July 3, 1863, the final day of a grueling 3-day fight. Lon commanded his battery along the wall on Cemetery Ridge, fending off punishing fire from General Lee's Confederate troops in advance of what we now know as Pickett's Charge. In the chaos and smoke, Lon and his men could barely see ahead of them. One colonel later described the "terrible grandeur of that rain of missiles and that chaos of strange and terror-spreading sounds."

Lon was hit and badly wounded. His first sergeant, a soldier by the name of Frederick Fuger, urged him to go to the rear. But Lon refused and said he'd "fight it out or die in the attempt." Bleeding and weak, he moved his remaining guns closer to the front. Over 10,000 Confederate infantrymen advanced, elbow to elbow, in rows over a mile wide. Peering through field glasses, Lon ordered his men to continue firing at the advancing columns. He used his own thumb to stop his gun's vent, burning his fingers to the bone. When he was hit the final time, as a poet later wrote, "His gun spoke out for him once more before he fell to the ground." And Alonzo Cushing was just 22 years old.

In a letter to Lon's sister, Fuger wrote that the bravery of their men that day "was entirely due to your brother's training and example set on numerous battlefields." Etched on Lon's tombstone at West Point is the simple epitaph, "Faithful unto death." And his memory will be honored later this month, when one of our Navy's cruisers—the USS *Gettysburg*—dedicates its officers' dining hall as the "Cushing Wardroom."

And here today, we know that Lon and the others who fell that day could not—we know what they could not: that Gettysburg was a turning point in the Civil War. It's also proof, if any was needed, that it was thousands of unknown young soldiers, committing unsung acts of heroism, who saved our Union and freed a people and reaffirmed our Nation as "one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." I'm mindful that I might not be standing here today, as President, had it not been for the ultimate sacrifices of those courageous Americans.

Today we honor just one of those men, Lieutenant Alonzo Cushing, who, as Lincoln said, gave their "last full measure of devotion." His story is part of our larger American story, one that continues today. The spirit, the courage, the determination that he demonstrated lives on in our brave men and women in uniform who this very day are serving and making sure that they are defending the freedoms that Alonzo helped to preserve. And it's incumbent on all of us as Americans to uphold the values that they fight for and to con-

tinue to honor their service long after they leave the battlefield, for decades, even centuries, to come.

So with that, I'd like to ask Helen to join me for the reading of the citation.

[*At this point, Maj. Steven M. Schreiber, USMC, Marine Corps Aide to the President, read the citation. The President then presented the medal, assisted by Lt. Col. Michael P. Wagner, USA, Army Aide to the President.*]

And let me ask the Members of Congress who helped to make this happen to join us for a photograph. And let's get our Secretary and—our two Secretaries right here. Come on up.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. Participating in the ceremony were Reps. Ronald J. Kind and James F. Sensenbrenner, Jr.; Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald; and Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Birth of the Founder of Sikhism
November 6, 2014

I want to congratulate our Sikh friends in the United States and around the world on the anniversary of the birth of the first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji. During his lifetime in the 15th and 16th centuries, Guru Nanak traveled throughout the region and world promoting equality, diversity, compassion, and tolerance, which became the core principles of Sikhism. The Sikh American community enriches the United States every day with its embodiment of these values, which are shared not just by Sikhs, but by all Americans.

Statement on the Death of Former Representative Lane A. Evans
November 6, 2014

Michelle and I were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of former Congressman Lane Evans. Lane was a proud veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and dedicated much of his public life to helping his fellow veterans, particularly those who fought in Vietnam and were exposed to agent orange. Lane was one of my earliest supporters when I ran for the Senate, and I was proud to have him by my side when I was elected President. Above all, Lane was an American hero, a dear friend, and a beloved public servant of the people of Illinois. Michelle and I extend our thoughts and prayers to Lane's family and friends and the people he represented in Congress who loved him so dearly.

Statement on the Selection of Jonathan A. Greenblatt as National Director of the Anti-Defamation League
November 6, 2014

I offer congratulations to Jonathan Greenblatt, who will succeed Abe Foxman as the next National Director of the Anti-Defamation League. As Director of the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation at the White House, Jonathan has been a valued member of my team and worked tirelessly to support innovative solutions to America's challenges. I can't thank him enough for his service.

For more than a century, the Anti-Defamation League has been a strong moral voice against anti-Semitism and hatred in all forms. I am confident that Jonathan will build on Abe's extraordinary legacy, ensuring that the Anti-Defamation League remains at the forefront of efforts to achieve greater justice, freedom, and equality for people in the United States and across the globe.

Remarks at PBS's "A Salute to the Troops: In Performance at the White House"
November 6, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Please, have a seat, have a seat. Well, good evening everybody. On behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House.

Tonight, as we near Veterans Day, we are continuing our White House music series with a salute to American patriots: our extraordinary troops, our veterans, and their families. And to help us pay tribute to these remarkable, remarkable individuals, our men and women in uniform, we've got some musical legends, like Willie Nelson, John Fogerty. We've got Mary J. Blige in the house. We've got Romeo Santos. We have Common here. Hill Harper and Logan Lerman are here as well, and we're going to be joined by Daughtry, who's playing at a big USO show at Yokota Air Base in Japan.

And we've got some of the finest musicians in our military. We've got Sergeant Christiana Ball, U.S. Army, and Captain John Auer and Captain Matt Smith, United States Marine Corps.

So, between all of these folks, we've got a little bit of rock and roll, we've got a little bit of country, little bit of everything in between. And that's fitting because here in America, no matter where you're from, no matter what music you listen to, we're all united in our respect and admiration for our brave men and women who wear our country's uniform. So let's give it up to—let's give it up for the servicemembers, the veterans, the families. We are so grateful to have you here tonight.

One of my greatest privileges as Commander in Chief is the opportunity to spend time with all of you and your families. I've met young men who willingly chose to move toward grenades to save their friends. I've met heroes who ran into enemy fire and carry their comrades to safety. And I have seen their families and the stress and strains that they go through, but nevertheless, they couldn't be prouder to support those family members who serve.

We've seen, obviously, families of the fallen who keep the spirit of their loved ones alive, and their strength then inspires the rest of us. And of course, we are inspired by our wounded warriors, whose injuries are no match for the sheer force of will that they display every single day. And some of them are joining us here from Walter Reed tonight. We are especially proud of them. So—[*applause*].

Just one story I want to tell, because I've gotten to know these folks pretty well. One of the wounded warriors here is Captain Luis Avila. I met Luis and his beautiful wife Claudia a few times, and their wonderful kids, and I want to just take a moment to share their story with you because I think it's representative of what it means to serve the United States of America, to be a true patriot.

Almost 3 years ago, just after Christmas, Luis was in his fifth deployment—this time in Afghanistan—when he was severely injured in an explosion. He lost his leg, fractured his spine, suffered two heart attacks and a traumatic brain injury. Two weeks after the explosion, he arrived in the United States in a coma and on life support. It was so dire that Claudia was forced to confront that agonizing question: Was it time for her to let him go, take him off life support?

But if you have a chance to meet Claudia, she's pretty strong and pretty stubborn. And she also had faith that Luis would recover. And, as she prayed during those desperate days, she began praying some of Luis's famous songs in the background: "Ode to Joy," military marches, and some Beatles. And then, he started twitching his facial muscles. And then, he opened his mouth. And then, he moved his tongue on command. And the whole time, Claudia was playing music day and night.

And then finally, Luis woke up. He couldn't see. He couldn't eat. He couldn't talk. But he'd heard those songs. And in the months and years that followed, he kept fighting back with the help of hundreds of hours of music therapy. And today, Luis can see again, he can eat again, he can speak again. He's even playing, as I understand, a little bit of golf. [*Laughter*]

And every night, he still goes to sleep with music playing.

So tonight we're honored to be joined by heroes like Luis and loving families like Claudia and their three boys, Luis Jr., Miguel, and José. And we honor them with the beauty of music, music that has the power to inspire us and fill us with pride and, yes, sometimes to help us heal. And once this concert is over, let's pledge to carry that spirit back to our own communities and to do our part, as Americans, to always serve these men and women as well as they have served us.

But for now, let's have a little bit of fun. Please welcome the one and only Mr. Willie Nelson.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:36 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musicians Lonnie R. "Common" Lynn, Jr., and Chris Daughtry; and actors Frank E. "Hill" Harper and Logan Lerman.

Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting
November 7, 2014

Well, this morning we learned that in October our businesses added 209,000 new jobs. The unemployment rate fell again. Our private sector has now added 10.6 million new jobs over the last 56 months, and this is the strongest job growth that we have seen since the 1990s.

And all this is a testament to the hard work and resilience of the American people. They have been steady and strong digging themselves out of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And what we need now to do is to make sure that we build on this momentum, because we recognize that despite the solid growth, despite the drop in unemployment, there are still a lot of folks out there who are anxious about their futures, who are having trouble making ends meet at the end of the month or saving for their kids' college education or being able to make sure that they're able to retire with dignity and respect. And so everything that we do over the next 2 years is designed and geared towards ensuring that folks who work hard in this country are able to get ahead.

Now, obviously, we've had a significant midterm election. As I said at the press conference, my attitude has been and will continue to be that good ideas don't necessarily come from just one party. And I'm looking forward to seeing the leaders of both Democratic and Republican caucuses this afternoon to have a chance to share with them both what I think we need to be doing to build on the economic momentum that we already have and make it even stronger, but I'm also going to be interested in listening to them in terms of areas where we think it's possible to work together, whether that is putting people back to work through stronger manufacturing here in the United States and selling more to countries around the world, one of the major topics that we're going to be discussing during my Asia trip next week; whether it's figuring out how we can build on some modest new investments that we've been making in early childhood education. We know that works. And there's strong bipartisan support around the country for some of those investments. Let's see if we can do more.

All these issues are ones in which there's a strong possibility of bipartisan cooperation, as long as we set politics aside for a moment and focus on the people who actually sent us here.

In the meantime, in these regular meetings that I'm having with my Cabinet, I've been emphasizing to them from day one and will reiterate in this meeting the fact that separate and apart from legislative activity, we have the capacity to continually improve how we deliver services to the American people. I think part of what's happened over a course of several decades is that people sometimes feel as if the Federal Government is distant, that it's not customer friendly, that there's too much bureaucracy.

And because of the fine work of many of the members of this Cabinet, what we've been able to do is start chipping away at some of the old ways of doing business and start instituting new ways of doing business that improve customer service, that make sure that people are getting the help they need.

This week, I had a chance to welcome and have a conversation with our new Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Bob McDonald, who is coming from the private sector, but also is coming from West Point and an extraordinary legacy of service in our Armed Forces. And what we're already seeing is that Bob is able to start skinning down the wait times for people in terms of getting appointments that they need, but also building on successes that have been taking place over the last several years, reducing homelessness, for example. With our HUD Secretaries Donovan and now Castro, we've reduced veterans homelessness by 30 percent. And a lot of that's not by virtue of new legislation, it's just by us focusing more on these problems and managing them better and continually listening to the American people to see how we can be more helpful.

So there are a lot of opportunities for us to do that here today. We're going to, I think, take an inventory of the progress that's being made in various departments. We're also going to focus on the fact that between now and the end of the year there's still some immediate work that needs to be done.

We have made progress in building the kind of public health infrastructure we need to deal with any eventualities with respect to Ebola, but it is still a concern both here domestically but most importantly, still a concern internationally. So we'll get reports from Sylvia Burwell as well as Susan Rice and others who have been actively involved in that fight. And Ron Klain, who's here, will tell us how the work we need to be doing with Congress can help advance and ultimately stamp out this epidemic overseas to make sure that the American people are safe.

We also have some significant national security issues. We've got to make sure that our efforts against ISIL are properly funded, and so that will—there will be an opportunity for Secretary of Defense Hagel to brief us on the progress in our campaign against ISIL in Iraq and some of the work we're doing in Syria.

So, bottom line is that, as I've told my White House staff and I've shared in the past with many of my Cabinet, we are extraordinarily privileged to be in a position where every single day we can have a positive impact in some way on the lives of the American people. And when I started out on this journey with Joe Biden, and we traveled around the country, we were constantly reminded of the hard work, of the sense of community, the sense of family that exists in every pocket and every corner of this country, the same kinds of values that Joe grew up on and I grew up on.

And what we want to do is to make sure that between now and the time that a next administration takes over, that every single day, in every single agency, we are constantly finding ways to build on those values and to make sure that we are making this country safer and more prosperous. And I know that based on the conversations I've had with this Cabinet, there is no lack of enthusiasm or energy in achieving that goal. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Ebola Response Coordinator Ronald A. Klain. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks Prior to a Lunch Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

November 7, 2014

The President. Well, I want to thank the leadership of both the House and the Senate for being here for this lunch, postelection. As I said the other night, obviously, Republicans

had a good night, and I've congratulated both Mitch McConnell as well as Speaker Boehner for running very strong campaigns.

As I also said the day after the election, what we've seen now for a number of cycles is that the American people just want to see work done here in Washington. I think they're frustrated by the gridlock. They'd like to see more cooperation. And I think all of us have the responsibility, me in particular, to try to make that happen. And so this gives us a good opportunity to explore where we can make progress on behalf of the people who sent us here.

The good news is, today we saw another good set of jobs numbers. We've now had 56 consecutive months of job growth; more than 10.6 million jobs have been created. And the unemployment rate now is down to 5.8 percent.

So business is out there investing, hiring. The economic indicators are going in the right direction. As I travel to Asia for the G–20 summit, I'm going to be able to say that we've actually created more jobs here in the United States than every other advanced country combined. And they notice that we're doing something right here. But what we also know is, is that the American people are still anxious about their futures, and that means that what we can do together to ensure that young people can afford college; what we can do together to rebuild our infrastructure so we're competitive going forward; what we can do together to make sure that we've got a tax system that is fair and simple and unleashes the dynamism of the economy; what we can do together to make sure that we keep the progress that we've been making in reducing the deficit while still making the investments we need to grow.

Those are all going to be areas where I'm very interested in hearing and sharing ideas. And then, the one thing that I've committed to both Speaker Boehner and Leader McConnell is that I am not going to judge ideas based on whether they're Democratic or Republican, I'm going to be judging them based whether or not they work. And I'm confident that they want to produce results as well on behalf of the American people.

So I appreciate their graciousness in coming here. And I'm very much looking forward to giving them some updates on progress we've been making on issues like Ebola and ISIL. There's going to be some specific work that has to get done during the next several weeks before the new Congress commences. And my hope is, is that even as we enter into a new Congress, the previous Congress has the opportunity still to make progress on a whole bunch of fronts, and I'm confident we can get that done.

So thank you again.

Selection Process To Replace Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr.

Q. Have you made a decision on an Attorney General, Mr. President?

The President. You're going to be the first to find out, Major [Major Garrett, CBS News], along with everybody else.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:52 p.m. in the Old Family Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Statement on the 25th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall
November 7, 2014

On behalf of the American people, I join our German friends and allies in marking the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Like many Americans, I will never forget the scenes of East Berliners courageously taking to the streets, pushing past the guards, and tearing down the wall that for so long had separated them from family and friends and the free world. Their triumph that night was a tribute to all those who had lost their lives over the decades trying to escape to freedom. It was a testament to the brave service of generations of

West Germans, Americans, and our fellow allies who stood shoulder to shoulder through a long cold war. And it was a reminder that walls of concrete and barbed wire are ultimately no match for the will of ordinary men and women who are determined to live free.

Twenty-five years later, we celebrate the progress that was made possible by the events of that November night. A united Germany plays a leading role in Europe and the world, and the United States is proud to count our German friends among our strongest allies. Nations across Central and Eastern Europe stand tall as proud democracies. Europe is more integrated, more prosperous, and more secure. But as Russia's actions against Ukraine remind us, we have more work to do to fully realize our shared vision of a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. In Europe and beyond—wherever citizens seek to determine their own destiny—we will be guided by the lessons of Berlin. Walls and oppressive regimes may endure for a time, but in the end, they cannot withstand the desire for liberty and human dignity that burns in every human heart.

Statement on the Nomination of Antony J. Blinken To Be Deputy Secretary of State

November 7, 2014

I'm proud to nominate Antony Blinken to be our next Deputy Secretary of State. I've known and worked closely with Tony for the past decade, starting when I joined the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and he was its staff director. For the past 6 years, I've relied on Tony in the White House, where I've come to have extraordinary respect for his knowledge, judgment, and inclusive approach to developing and implementing our foreign policy. As everyone who knows and works with Tony can attest, he is a person of enormous integrity, with a tireless work ethic and deep love of country. He is exactly the type of person who we want to represent the United States of America overseas. If confirmed by the Senate, I know he will continue to do a great job on behalf of my administration, Secretary Kerry, and the American people.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

November 7, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that was declared in Executive Order 12938 is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2014.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
November 8, 2014

Hi, everybody. This weekend, I depart for Asia to advance American leadership and promote American jobs in a dynamic region that will be critical to our security and prosperity in the century ahead. The democracies, progress, and growth we see across the Asia-Pacific would have been impossible without America's enduring commitment to that region, especially the service of generations of Americans in uniform. As we approach Veterans Day, we honor them and all those who've served to keep us free and strong.

We salute that greatest generation who freed a continent from fascism and fought across Pacific islands to preserve our way of life. We pay tribute to Americans who defended the people of South Korea, soldiered through the brutal battles of Vietnam, stood up to a tyrant in Desert Storm, and stopped ethnic cleansing in the Balkans.

And we celebrate our newest heroes from the 9/11 generation, our veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. For more than 13 years, we have been at war in Afghanistan. Next month, our combat mission will be over, and America's longest war will come to a responsible end.

But the end of a war is just the beginning of our obligations to those who serve in our name. These men and women will be proud veterans for decades to come, and our service to them has only just begun. So, as we welcome our newest veterans home, let's honor them by giving them the thanks and respect they deserve. And let's make sure we're there for their families and children too, because they've also made great sacrifices for America.

Let's honor our veterans by making sure they get the care and benefits they've earned. That means health care that's there for them when they need it. It means continuing to reduce the disabilities claim backlog. And it means giving our wounded warriors all the care and support they need to heal, including mental health care for those with posttraumatic stress or traumatic brain injury. Some of the most moving moments I've experienced as Commander in Chief have been with our wounded warriors. Some have to learn how to walk again, talk again, write their names again. But no matter how hard it is, they never give up. They never quit. And we can't ever quit on them.

Let's honor our veterans by making sure they get their shot at the American Dream that they risked their lives to defend, by helping them find jobs worthy of their skills and talents and making sure the post-9/11 GI bill stays strong so more veterans can earn a college education. When our veterans have the opportunity to succeed, our whole Nation is stronger. And let's work together to end the tragedy of homelessness among veterans once and for all, because anyone who has defended America deserves to live in dignity in America.

Finally, let's honor our veterans by remembering that this isn't just a job for Government, it's a job for every American. We're all keepers of that sacred trust that says, if you put on a uniform and risk your life to keep us safe, we'll do our part for you. We'll make sure you and your family get the support you need. We'll have your backs, just like you had ours.

So this Veterans Day and every day, let's make sure all our veterans know how much we appreciate them. If you see a veteran, go on up and shake their hand. Look them in the eye. Say those words that every veteran deserves to hear: "Welcome home. Thank you. We need you more than ever to help us stay strong and free."

And then, let's come together, as Americans, to make sure we're there for them and their families for all the years of all their lives.

God bless our veterans and their families, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5 p.m. on November 6 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on November 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 8.

Remarks on the Nomination of Loretta E. Lynch To Be Attorney General and an Exchange With Reporters

November 8, 2014

The President. Good morning. As President, I rely on my Cabinet every day to make sure that we are not just getting the job done, but we're making progress for the American people. And in a country that is built on the rule of law, there are few offices more important than that of Attorney General.

The Attorney General is the people's lawyer. As our Nation's chief law enforcement officer, the person in this position is responsible for enforcing our Federal laws, including protecting our civil rights. Working with the remarkable men and women of the Justice Department, the Attorney General oversees the vast portfolio of cases, including counterterrorism and voting rights, public corruption and white-collar crime, judicial recommendations and policy reviews, all of which impact on the lives of every American and shape the life of our Nation.

As I said back in September when he decided to step down, I am enormously grateful to Eric Holder for his outstanding service in this position. He is one of the longest serving Attorney Generals in American history, and one of our finest. Eric brought to this job a belief that justice isn't just an abstract theory, but a living, breathing principle. It's about how laws interact with the daily lives of our people: whether we can make an honest living, whether we can provide for our families, whether we feel safe in our own communities and welcome in our own country, whether the words that the Founders set to paper 238 years ago apply to every one of us in our time.

So thanks to Eric, our Nation is safer and freer, and more Americans—regardless of race or religion or gender or creed or sexual orientation or disability—receive fair and equal treatment under the law. I couldn't be prouder of Eric. And I couldn't be prouder that today I can announce somebody who shares that fierce commitment to equal justice under the law as my nominee for the next Attorney General, U.S. Attorney Loretta Lynch. [*Applause*] Hey!

I also, by the way, want to thank the Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Patrick Leahy, for being here on a Saturday to show his support. So—[*applause*].

It's pretty hard to be more qualified for this job than Loretta. [*Laughter*] Throughout her 30-year career, she has distinguished herself as tough, as fair, an independent lawyer who has twice headed one of the most prominent U.S. attorney's offices in the country. She has spent years in the trenches as a prosecutor, aggressively fighting terrorism, financial fraud, cybercrime, all while vigorously defending civil rights.

A graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, Loretta rose from Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Eastern District of New York to Chief of the Long Island Office, Chief Assistant U.S. Attorney, and U.S. Attorney. She successfully prosecuted the terrorists who plotted the bomb—plotted to bomb the Federal Reserve Bank and the New York City subway. She has boldly gone after public corruption, bringing charges against public officials in both parties. She's helped secure billions in settlements from some of the world's biggest banks accused of fraud and jailed some of New York's most violent and notorious mobsters and gang members.

One of her proudest achievements was the civil rights prosecution of the officers involved in the brutal assault of the Haitian immigrant Abner Louima. Loretta might be the only lawyer in America who battles mobsters and drug lords and terrorists and still has the reputation for being a charming people person. [*Laughter*]

That's probably because Loretta doesn't look to make headlines, she looks to make a difference. She's not about splash, she is about substance. I could not be more confident that Loretta will bring her signature intelligence and passion and commitment to our key priorities, including important reforms in our criminal justice system.

She has consistently proven her leadership and earned the trust and respect of those she serves. Since 2010, she has been a member of the Committee of the U.S. attorneys across the Nation who advise the Attorney General on matters of policy, and she has served as Chair of that Committee since 2013. So it's no wonder that the Senate unanimously confirmed her to be the head of the U.S. Attorney's Office in two separate situations: once under President Clinton and once under my administration. And it's my hope that the Senate will confirm her a third time without delay.

At every stage in her career, Loretta has followed the principles of fairness, equality, and justice that she absorbed as a young girl. She was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, the year before Black students there sat down at a Whites-only lunch counter, helping to spark a movement that would change the course of this country.

The daughter of a school librarian and a fourth-generation Baptist minister—which meant that she knew when to be quiet—[*laughter*]—that's a little intimidating, being the daughter of a librarian and a minister. [*Laughter*] But Loretta rode on her father's shoulders to his church, where students would meet to organize antisegregation boycotts. She was inspired by stories about her grandfather, a sharecropper in the 1930s, who helped folks in his community who got in trouble with the law and had no recourse under the Jim Crow system. I know that if he were here today, he would be just as proud of her as I'm sure her husband Stephen is. I want to thank Stephen, Loretta's stepson Ryan, her stepdaughter Kia, and her other family members who came here today. We appreciate you guys agreeing to share her with the American people a little bit longer.

Loretta has spent her life fighting for fair and equal justice that is the foundation of our democracy. I can think of no better public servant to be our next Attorney General. Let me introduce to you Ms. Loretta Lynch.

Attorney General–designate Lynch. Thank you, everyone. And thank you, first of all, Mr. President, for that kind introduction. But most importantly, thank you also for your faith in me in asking me to succeed an Attorney General whom I admire and to lead the Department that I love.

Now, no one gets to this place, this room, this podium, this moment by themselves. I also must thank Attorney General Eric Holder for your support and your friendship over the years, as well as by leading by example and always, always pushing this Department to live up to its name. And I want to thank Chairman Leahy, senior officials of the Department of Justice, and members of the Cabinet for being here today.

To my colleagues in the U.S. attorney community and throughout the Department, on whose strength and wisdom I lean every day, thank all of you, as well, for your support both now and in all the work that we have ahead.

And to my beloved office, the Eastern District of New York, my professional home: You have twice now given me the privilege of being able to serve you and to focus on nothing—nothing—but the protection of the American people. It has been a joy, it has been an honor, and I will carry you with me wherever I go.

And of course, to my wonderful family, several of whom are here with me today, all of whom are always with me in love and support, most especially my parents—who could not be here today, but are watching—whose every thought and sacrifice has always been for their children. They have supported me in all of my endeavors as I strive to live up to their example of service.

The Department of Justice is the only Cabinet Department named for an ideal. And this is actually appropriate, because our work is both aspirational and grounded in gritty reality. It's both ennobling, and it's both profoundly challenging.

Today I stand before you so thrilled and frankly so humbled to have the opportunity to lead this group of wonderful people who work all day and well into the night to make that ideal a manifest reality, all as part of their steadfast protection of the citizens of this country.

Mr. President, thank you again for the faith that you've placed in me. I pledge today to you

and to the American people that if I have the honor of being confirmed by the Senate, I will wake up every morning with the protection of the American people my first thought. And I will work every day to safeguard our citizens, our liberties, our rights, and this great Nation which have given so much to me and my family.

I thank you again, Mr. President and Mr. Attorney General, and all of you, for being here.

Release of Kenneth Bae and Matthew T. Miller From Captivity in North Korea

Q. [*Inaudible*]—the release of Americans from North Korea today?

The President. Well, I think it's a wonderful day for them and their families. And obviously, we're very grateful for their safe return. And I appreciate Director Clapper doing a great job on what was obviously a challenging mission. All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Justin A. Volpe, Charles Schwarz, Thomas Bruder, and Thomas Wiese, former police officers, New York City Police Department, who were convicted in connection with the 1997 assault of Abner Louima; Lorine and Lorenzo Lynch, parents of Attorney General–designate Lynch; and Stephen Hargrove, husband of Attorney General–designate Lynch, and their children Ryan and Kia Hargrove.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo of Indonesia in Beijing, China

November 10, 2014

President Obama. Well, it is a pleasure to meet President Widodo. I want to congratulate him on an inspiring election. And as many of you know, I have a very close association with Indonesia, having spent a good deal of my childhood there.

I think that in watching President Widodo's election, it is once again an affirmation of the full transition that Indonesia has made to a thriving democracy and a model for the kind of tolerance and pluralism that we want to see all around the world.

I know that President Widodo has a very ambitious reform agenda, and my main message here today is that the United States wants to be a strong partner with Indonesia in helping achieve its goals.

As part of our comprehensive partnership, we've already worked on a wide range of issues—economic, development, security, people-to-people exchanges, environmental cooperation—and I look forward to discussing how we can build on that momentum, perhaps even with a visit by President Widodo in Washington next year.

I also want to thank Indonesia for the leadership regionally, as well as internationally, that it has shown on a number of issues. As a leader in ASEAN, Indonesia has been a driving force around the work that we've done on disaster assistance, on education, on scientific and technical exchanges, as well as issues of maritime security. And both our countries agree that it's important for us to maintain international norms that ensure freedom of navigation and that all countries are treated fairly and equitably.

And finally, as one of the world's largest democracies and also as one of the world's largest Islamic populations, Indonesia has played an extraordinary role in promoting pluralism and respect for religious diversity. And I want to thank Indonesia in the work that it's done to isolate extremism and to work with other countries around counterterrorism efforts.

So, Mr. President, I very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you. I hope that we can develop not only a strong personal friendship, but can continue to build the strong friendship between our two peoples.

President Widodo. I would like to thank Your Excellency, and this will be the first time that I meet President Obama. And I would like

to also thank you—thank the special envoy, the Secretary of State, John Kerry, for his visit to my Inauguration ceremony.

Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world and has just conducted its Presidential election, a cause for democratic celebration in our country. And it shows that Islam and democracy can go along together.

In regards to extremism and radicalism, we have an experience of more than 50 years, and we will continue to fight this extremism and radicalism, and not only by a security approach, but also by a cultural approach and also a religious approach.

With regards to the stability—the security and stability in the region, we will continue cooperation among countries in responding to security issues in the region.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:46 a.m. at the Westin Beijing Chaoyang hotel. President Widodo spoke in Bahasa Indonesia, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Trans-Pacific Partnership Leaders in Beijing

November 10, 2014

I want to thank all my fellow leaders and the Trade Ministers for joining us here today. I know we all have very busy schedules, so I'm going to keep my remarks brief.

We're here today because the Trans-Pacific Partnership is a high priority for our nations and for the region. As President, strengthening American leadership in the Asia-Pacific has been one of my top foreign policy priorities. And central to that objective is working with some of our most important trading partners to try to find ways in which we can facilitate increased growth for all of us, increased investment for all of us, improved jobs prospects for all of us.

And what we are seeing is momentum building around a Trans-Pacific Partnership that can spur greater economic growth, spur greater jobs growth, set high standards for trade and investment throughout the Asia-Pacific. And I don't think I have to explain to the press why this region is so important. This is the fastest growing, most populous, most dynamic region in the world economically.

During the past few weeks, our teams have made good progress in resolving several outstanding issues regarding a potential agreement. Today is an opportunity at the political level for us to break some remaining logjams. To ensure that TPP is a success, we also have to make sure that all of our people back home understand the benefits for them: that it means more trade, more good jobs, and higher incomes for people throughout the region, including the United States. And that's a case that I'll continue to make to Congress and the American people. And I know that the leaders here are committed to making that case as well.

This has the potential for being a historic achievement. It's now up to all of us to see if we can finalize a deal that is both ambitious and comprehensive. The stronger the agreement, the greater the benefits to our people.

So to all my fellow leaders, I want to thank you not just for your participation here today, but more importantly, for the mandate that you have given to your negotiating teams to engage in some very serious work that promises to deliver greater prosperity, trade, and commerce between our nations in the future.

Thank you very much. Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. at the U.S. Embassy.

Joint Statement by Trans-Pacific Partnership Leaders
November 10, 2014

We, the Leaders of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, United States, and Vietnam, welcome the significant progress in recent months, as reported to us by our Ministers, that sets the stage to bring these landmark Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations to conclusion. We are encouraged that Ministers and negotiators have narrowed the remaining gaps on the legal text of the agreement and that they are intensively engaging to complete ambitious and balanced packages to open our markets to one another, in accordance with the instructions we gave them in Bali a year ago. With the end coming into focus, we have instructed our Ministers and negotiators to make concluding this agreement a top priority so that our businesses, workers, farmers, and consumers can start to reap the real and substantial benefits of the TPP agreement as soon as possible.

As we mobilize our teams to conclude the negotiations, we remain committed to ensuring that the final agreement reflects our common vision of an ambitious, comprehensive, high-standard, and balanced agreement that enhances the competitiveness of our economies, promotes innovation and entrepreneurship, spurs economic growth and prosperity, and supports job creation in our countries. We are dedicated to ensuring that the benefits of the agreement serve to promote development that is sustainable, broad based and inclusive, and that the agreement takes into account the diversity of our levels of development. The gains that TPP will bring to each of our countries can expand even further should the open approach we are developing extend more broadly throughout the region. We remain committed to a TPP structure that can include other regional partners that are prepared to adopt its high standards.

Our fundamental direction to our Ministers throughout this process has been to negotiate an outcome that will generate the greatest possible benefit for each of our countries. In order to achieve that, our governments have worked to reflect the input we each have received from our stakeholders in the negotiation. Continued engagement will be critical as our Ministers work to resolve the remaining issues in the negotiation.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia and an Exchange With Reporters in Beijing
November 10, 2014

President Obama. I just want to express my appreciation to Prime Minister Abbott and his team and the people of Australia not only for the upcoming G–20 and the arrangements that they've made for what I'm sure is going to be a very important discussion about global growth, but for the incredibly strong bilateral alliance and relationship between our peoples. Time and again, Australia has stood shoulder to shoulder with the United States on issues of critical international security. Today is no different.
to thank him for the security partnership that

We have seen Australian participation as part of a coalition dealing with ISIL in Iraq. They continue to be an outstanding member of the coalition in our efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. Tony personally has expressed his extraordinary commitment to battling foreign fighters that threaten both of our homelands. And obviously, the men and women of the Australian Armed Forces have terrific capabilities and on many occasions have made extraordinary sacrifice. So, first and foremost, I want we have.

We also have a strong economic partnership. And I'm certain that the G–20 will be productive because Tony has emphasized the need for us to emphasize growth and jobs. That's true in Australia, that's true in the United States. It's true around the world at a time when global demand continues to be weak and we see certain regions of the world lagging behind the kind of growth rates that we'd like to see. And so I'm looking forward to a very productive conversation there.

We also discussed the opportunities. TPP is an obvious one, and Australia has been an outstanding partner on that front. We have additional opportunities in APEC and the East Asia Summit to discuss how this incredibly dynamic region can cooperate more effectively together around issues like infrastructure, disaster relief, streamlining regulations to facilitate greater trade. Throughout all this, we find that Australia consistently shares values, ideals, a sense of global responsibility that is unparalleled. And we very much appreciate our friendship and our cooperation and are confident that over the next several days, we'll be making progress on all these fronts.

Prime Minister Abbott. Barack, thank you so much. It's great to be here in Beijing with you and with obviously many other leaders.

I see the next couple of days in Beijing here at APEC as being very much the right lead-in to the G–20 in Brisbane, because essentially, both APEC and the G–20 are about growth and jobs. That's what the world needs. It needs more growth. And more growth means more jobs.

So I'm very pleased to be here. I guess I should observe that one of the innovations of the G–20 this year has been not only to agree that we need more growth, but for all of the G–20 countries to put forward its plan for growth and to submit individual country plans to a form of peer review. And the fact that we've all been able to say not just that we want growth, but that we intend to get extra growth in a particular way, and then to let everyone know what that way is means that there's a good chance that it's actually going to get delivered because we'll be able to see in the months and years ahead how much of these growth strategies are actually being delivered.

But again, if I may say, it is always good to be with the President of the United States. Australia and the United States are a great partnership. And I want to thank President Obama for the leadership that he's shown in so many areas. But obviously, as we deal with the ISIL death cult in the Middle East, your leadership has been deft. And Australia is very—I mean, we don't like being—the necessity of being part of the coalition, but it is a necessity. And that's why we'll be a staunch member.

President Obama. Okay. All right, we've got time for a couple questions each. We'll start with Julie Pace at AP.

Release of Kenneth Bae and Matthew T. Miller From Captivity in North Korea/North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Can you give us a sense of what signals or outreach you received from the North Koreans that led to your decision to send James Clapper to secure the release of the Americans? And do you see this breakthrough as a possible precursor to broader talks with North Korea on nuclear issues or other matters?

President Obama. We had an indication that there was the possibility of the release of these two hostages or prisoners, and we pursued it. It did not touch on some of the broader issues that have been the source of primary concern when it comes to North Korea, its—in particular, its development of nuclear capacity.

There were not high-level policy discussions between Jim Clapper and the North Koreans. But we have been consistent in saying that when and if North Korea becomes serious about denuclearization on the peninsula and is prepared to have a conversation around that topic, then the United States is going to be very open to trying to arrive at a solution that over the long term, could lead to greater prosperity and security for North Korea.

Until that time, there's going to be a core problem between us. And obviously, I'm incredibly thankful to Jim Clapper for the efforts that he made. And I couldn't be happier

for the families, as we enter into the holidays, to know that their loved ones are back. It's a good-news story.

We continue, though, to have a broader fundamental conflict with the North Koreans. And it's going to take, I think, in addition to small gestures like the ones that we saw—the release of these individuals—a broader understanding on the part of the North Koreans that all the countries in the region, including China, including the Republic of Korea, including Japan consider this to be their number-one security priority: making sure that we do not have a nuclearizing Korean Peninsula. And up until this point at least, we had not seen serious engagement on the part of Pyongyang to deal with that problem.

Q. Did you get any better indication about Kim Jong Un and his strategy for dealing with the U.S. through these negotiations?

President Obama. No.

Prime Minister Abbott. I think we have an Australian question? Phil?

Proposed Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank/China

Q. Phil Currie, from the Australian Financial Review. Mr. President, your Government had conversations with our Government about China's proposal for the Infrastructure Investment Bank in the region. Could I ask you, sir, what your concerns were about that bank, what you relayed to our Government? Were they more strategic, or were they financial?

And, Mr. Abbott, would you like to comment as well?

President Obama. It's interesting. We were talking before you came in about my belief that it's in all of our interest for China to be successful, prosperous, and to be an outstanding international partner.

You want the most populous country in the world to be stable and successful. And as China has undertaken this extraordinary journey over the last several decades and we've seen unprecedented numbers of people move out of dire poverty into a more stable economic situation, it's all for the good if China then now becomes a contributor to broader international efforts to help less developed countries and to alleviate poverty elsewhere.

So, not only are we not opposed to those efforts, we want to actively encourage efforts for China to make contributions to the international order. But what we've consistently said is that it's important for China to uphold international rules and norms as it expands its influence both regionally and around the world.

So, on something like a infrastructure bank in this region, making sure that there's transparency and accountability, and that if it's in fact a multilateral institution, that there are rules that all countries are abiding by in the operations of the institution. Those are the same rules by which the World Bank or IMF or Asia Development Bank or any other international institutions needs to abide by.

When the United States helped to craft those institutions after World War II, the United States deliberately restrained itself in some ways, bound itself to certain norms and certain rules because we were confident that when everybody is following a set of rules of the road, all of us are better off, large countries, small countries alike.

And so I think our message, whether it's on the Asia development bank or on some of the maritime issues that have caused tension and consternation in the region, our message is that we want to see China successful. Inevitably, they are going to have influence and exert a certain gravitational pull just by dint of size and what's happened with their economy and the extraordinary capabilities of their people. But as they grow, we want them to be a partner in underwriting the international order, not undermining it.

Prime Minister Abbott. Phil, as you know, the Chinese have been promoting this for at least 12 months now. And ever since the idea was first floated, many countries have been talking to China about it and amongst themselves about it. So there have been lots and lots of conversations with a whole range of people in countries about the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank.

In principle, a new multilateral body to help promote infrastructure will be good for growth

and good for jobs. But it does, as far as we're concerned, have to be a genuinely multilateral body, and as a genuinely multilateral body, we'd be very happy to be part of it, and I think most countries would. And I guess that's what we're looking to see. We're looking to see some evolution in the time ahead to a situation where this has the sorts of governance and transparency that other multilateral institutions have so that it's a body that no one country can unilaterally control. And if and when we get that, I think it will be a good contributor to growth in our region and in the wider world.

President Obama. Phil Mattingly [Bloomberg Television].

Hong Kong/China/Human Rights/Burma

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Chinese President Xi Jinping said yesterday that he backed how the current Chief Executive is handling protesters in Hong Kong. I wondered if you agreed with that assessment. And what, if any, concerns do you plan on raising about the issue while you're here in Beijing?

President Obama. Our message has been consistent with President Xi and with his predecessors. There are certain things that the United States believes. We believe in freedom of speech. We believe in freedom of association. We believe in openness in government as befitting our traditions and our way of life. We don't expect China to follow an American model in every instance, but we're going to continue to have concerns about human rights. Obviously, the situation between China and Hong Kong is historically complicated and is in a process of transition. And I think our primary message has been to make sure that violence is avoided as the people of Hong Kong try to sort through what this next phase of their relationship is to the mainland.

But we're not going to stop speaking out on behalf of the things that we care about, recognizing that we also have significant interest in business to do with China and recognizing that China is not at the same place in terms of their development, both politically and economically, as we are today. But I think it would be unrealistic to expect that we set those concerns aside because, as I've said in international forums as well as bilateral meetings, respect for human rights, respect for the dignity of individuals, I don't believe is unique to America, it's not unique to the West. I think people have aspirations for a certain amount of freedom and dignity and the ability to shape their own lives all around the globe. And I'm proud that despite the fact that in too many places those rights aren't always observed, that we're consistently a voice encouraging more space for those voices.

When we travel to Burma later on this trip, you're seeing an evolution that's taking place there that's powerful. It's incomplete, it takes place in fits and starts, but it's something that ultimately, I believe, will result in greater prosperity and security for the people there. And to the extent that we can be constructive partners and observers to that process, we will do so.

Prime Minister Abbott. I think there's another Australian question.

U.S. Strategy To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Iraq

Q. Thank you, Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Abbott. Mark Kenny.

Q. A question for both gentlemen. I'm sorry, Mark Kenny from Fairfax Media in Australia. A question for both of you, if I may.

Mr. President, you've recently increased your country's commitment to the Iraq campaign against ISIL. I'm wondering, was this specifically raised as a topic in the meeting you've just had? Did you put a request to Australia that it also increase its troop commitment or its military commitment to that effort?

President Obama. It was a topic, because, as I said, Australia has been a stalwart contributor to this effort. And Tony has been crystal clear about why it's so important for us to defeat ISIL, not only for the good of the region and the people of Iraq, but ultimately, for the people of the United States and Australia and people around the world.

But what I explained to Tony was the same thing that I said in an interview yesterday in the United States. We're moving to a slightly

different phase now. The—initially, our goal was to stop the momentum of ISIL as it was sweeping through Iraq, and you were seeing too many Iraqi security force units scatter. And although, particularly in Anbar Province in the west, you're still seeing ISIL take over isolated towns, you haven't seen the same momentum.

The situation with respect to Iraqi security forces has stabilized, although the number of effective units is significantly smaller than it needs to be. So the next phase is for us to train and assist Iraqi security forces so that they can begin to build up and go on offense. We can provide close air support, we can provide logistics and intelligence, but ultimately, they're the ones who are going to have to fight to push ISIL out of some of these areas that they've taken over. And in order for us to do that, we're going to have to have more trainers on the ground, and that is the reason why I authorized this additional number of U.S. troops.

What hasn't changed is that it's not our folks who are going to be doing the fighting. Iraqis ultimately have to fight ISIL, and they have to determine their own security. But we are recognizing the need for us to ramp up Iraqi capabilities, not only the Iraqi security forces, but also some of the tribes in western Iraq that have shown a willingness to go against ISIL, but are outgunned and too often outmaneuvered at this stage.

Now, I recognize that the United States, as one member of the coalition, has some unique capabilities in setting up the template, setting up the structure for that training to take place in a way that protects our people, ensures that we have the kinds of enablers that make it safe for our folks to be there, not without risk, but at least protects them against extraordinary risks.

As we are setting that up, I am having conversations with Australia and other coalition partners that are already committed to putting trainers in to see how they can supplement and work with us in this overall effort. But the key point that I emphasized to Tony and I'm emphasizing to all our coalition members is, our task here is to help Iraqis help themselves. This is not the same situation as we saw either in the Iraq war in 2003, 2004, 2005, or what we've been doing in Afghanistan, where our men and women have been much more in the front lines. It doesn't mean that there are not risks involved, and I'm very mindful of making sure that as we look at these train-and-assist plans, that we're setting up the best possible circumstance for what is an inherently dangerous job, but it does mean that the principle that we're not engaged in direct combat, that continues.

Prime Minister Abbott. The President is absolutely right. The ISIL death cult is a menace to the whole world. They've declared war on the world. And it's good that the President, working with the Iraq Government, has assembled a strong coalition to assist the Iraqi Government to respond effectively and ultimately to regain control over its own territory.

I think it's very important that we never lose sight of the fact that this death cult is, to quote Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib, it's against God, it's against Islam, and it's against our common humanity, as we've seen repeatedly in recent months.

So it is important to respond strongly, which is what the U.S.-led coalition is doing. There are various different missions here. There's the advise-and-assist mission. There's a developing train-and-assist mission. Our priority at the moment is getting our special forces into Baghdad and then into the field on the advise-and-assist mission that we've set them. That's happening, and I'm confident that our people will do good work.

But the point that the President makes is absolutely right. In the end, no one is going to fight harder for Iraq than Iraqis will fight for themselves. And that's what we're doing. We are helping them to reclaim their country from something which is evil, from something which is a menace to them, and if it's allowed to remain, will be a menace to all of us.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. at the U.S. Embassy. A reporter referred to Su-

preme Commander Kim Jong Un of North Korea.

Remarks at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation CEO Summit in Beijing
November 10, 2014

President Obama. Thank you so much. *Xièwu hao.* [*Applause*] Thank you, Andrew, for that introduction. I have had the pleasure of getting to know Andrew very well these past few years. We have worked him hard. He's helped my administration with strategies for growing high-tech manufacturing to hiring more long-term unemployed. He's just as good at corporate citizenship as he is at running a corporation. Later, I'll visit Brisbane, where I know Andrew spent some of his youth. I'm sure he's got some suggestions for fun there, but not necessarily things that a President can do. So—[*laughter*]. We don't know how he spent his youth, but I'm sure he had some fun.

It is wonderful to be back in China, and I'm grateful for the Chinese people's extraordinary hospitality. This is my sixth trip to Asia as President, and my second this year alone. And that's because, as I've said on each of my visits, America is a thoroughly Pacific nation. We've always had a history with Asia. And our future—our security and our prosperity—is inextricably intertwined with Asia. I know the business leaders in attendance today agree.

I've now had the privilege to attend the APEC CEO Summit in Singapore, in Yokohama, and in my original hometown of Honolulu, now in Beijing. And I think it's safe to say that few global forums are watched more closely by the business community. There's a good reason for that. Taken together, APEC economies account for about 40 percent of the world's population and nearly 60 percent of its GDP. That means we're home to nearly 3 billion customers and three-fifths of the global economy.

And over the next 5 years, nearly half of all economic growth outside the United States is projected to come from right here, in Asia. That makes this region an incredible opportunity for creating jobs and economic growth in the United States. And any serious leader in America, whether in politics or in commerce, recognizes that fact.

Now, the last time I addressed this CEO summit was 3 years ago. Today I've come back at a moment when, around the world, the United States is leading from a position of strength. This year, of course, has seen its share of turmoil and uncertainty. But whether it's our fight to degrade and destroy the terrorist network known as ISIL or to contain and combat the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, the one constant—the one global necessity—is and has been American leadership.

And that leadership in the world is backed by the renewed strength of our economy at home. Today, our businesses have created 10.6 million jobs over the longest uninterrupted stretch of job growth in American history. We're on pace for the best year of job growth since the 1990s. Since we started creating jobs again, the U.S. has put more people back to work than Europe, Japan, and every other advanced economy combined.

And when you factor in what's happening in our broader economy—a manufacturing sector that, as Andrew said, is growing now at a rapid pace; graduation rates that are rising; deficits that have shrunk by two-thirds; health care inflation at 50-year lows; and an energy boom at new highs—when you put all this together, what you get is an American economy that is primed for steadier, more sustained growth and better poised to lead and succeed in the 21st century than just about any other nation on Earth.

And you don't have to take our word for it, take yours. For 2 years in a row, business executives like all of you have said that the world's most attractive place to invest is the United States. And we're going to go for a three-peat. We're going to try to make it the same this year.

But despite the responsibilities of American leadership around the world, despite our attention to getting our economy growing, there should be no doubt that the United States of America remains entirely committed when it comes to Asia. America is a Pacific power, and we are leading to promote shared security and shared economic growth this century, just as we did in the last.

In fact, one of my core messages throughout this trip—from APEC to the East Asia Summit to the G–20 in Australia—is that working together we need growth that is balanced, growth that is strong, growth that is sustainable, and growth where prosperity is shared by everybody who is willing to work hard.

As President of the United States, I make no apologies for doing whatever I can to bring new jobs and new industries to America. But I've always said, in the 21st century, the pursuit of economic growth, job creation, and trade is not a zero-sum game. One country's prosperity doesn't have to come at the expense of another. If we work together and act together, strengthening the economic ties between our nations will benefit all of our nations. That's true for the nations of APEC, and I believe it's particularly true for the relationship between the United States and China.

I've had the pleasure of hosting President Xi twice in the United States. The last time we met, in California, he pointed out that the Pacific Ocean is big enough for both of our nations. And I agree. The United States welcomes the rise of a prosperous, peaceful, and stable China. I want to repeat that. [*Applause*] I want to repeat that: We welcome the rise of a prosperous, peaceful, and stable China.

In fact, over recent decades the United States has worked to help integrate China into the global economy, not only because it's in China's best interests, but because it's in America's best interests and the world's best interests. We want China to do well.

We compete for business, but we also seek to cooperate on a broad range of shared challenges and shared opportunities, whether it's stopping the spread of Ebola or preventing nuclear—or preventing nuclear proliferation or deepening our clean energy partnership, combating climate change, a leadership role that, as the world's two largest economies and two largest carbon emitters, we have a special responsibility to embrace.

If China and the United States can work together, the world benefits. And that's something this audience is acutely interested in. We continually have to work to strengthen the bilateral trade and investment between our two nations. America's first trade mission visited China just a year after America's revolution ended. Two hundred and thirty years later, we are the two largest economies in the world.

And the trade and investment relationship we have benefits both of our countries. China is our fastest growing export market. Chinese direct investment in the United States has risen sixfold over the past 5 years. Chinese firms directly employ a rapidly growing number of Americans. And all these things mean jobs for the American people, and deepening these ties will mean more jobs and opportunity for both of our peoples.

And that's why I'm very pleased to announce that during my visit, the United States and China have agreed to implement a new arrangement for visas that will benefit everyone from students to tourists to businesses large and small. Under the current arrangement, visas between our two countries last for only 1 year. Under the new arrangement, student and exchange visas will be extended to 5 years, business and tourist visas will be extended to 10 years.

Now, of course, that will be good for the businessmen who are going back and forth all the time. But keep in mind, last year, 1.8 million Chinese visitors to the United States contributed $21 billion to our economy and supported more than 100,000 American jobs. This agreement could help us more than quadruple those numbers.

I've heard from American business leaders about how valuable this step will be. And we've worked hard to achieve this outcome because it clearly serves the mutual interests of both of our countries. So I'm proud that during my visit to China, we will mark this important break-

through, which will benefit our economies, bring our people together, and I'm pleased that President Xi has been a partner in getting this done. Very much appreciate his work on this.

Now, deepening our economic ties is why I also hope to make progress with President Xi towards an ambitious, high-standard, bilateral investment treaty that opens up China's economy to American investors, an agreement that could unlock even more progress and more opportunity in both of our countries. We're also working to put—in pursuit of an international agreement on the ITA. And we'll speak directly and candidly, as we always do, about specific actions China can take to help all of us, across the Asia-Pacific, to expand trade and investment, which many of the CEOs I talk to raise in our discussions.

We look to China to create a more level playing field on which foreign companies are treated fairly so that they can compete fairly with Chinese companies, a playing field where competition policy promotes the welfare of consumers and doesn't benefit just one set of companies over another. We look to China to become an innovative economy that values the protection of intellectual property rights and rejects cybertheft of trade secrets for commercial gain. We look to China to approve biotechnology advances that are critical to feeding a growing planet on the same timeline as other countries, to move definitively towards a more market-determined exchange rate, and yes, to stand up for human rights and freedom of the press. And we don't suggest these things because they're good for us, we suggest that China do these things for the sake of sustainable growth in China and the stability of the Asia-Pacific region. And I look forward to discussing these issues, along with China's concerns and ideas, with President Xi over the next few days.

Now, even as America works to deepen our bilateral ties with China, we're focused this week on deepening our ties with all the APEC economies, including reducing barriers to trade and investment so that companies like yours can grow, create new jobs, and promote prosperity across the Asia-Pacific region.

After all, Asia's largest export market is the United States. That benefits American consumers because it has led to more affordable goods and services. Six of America's top 10 export markets are APEC economies, and more than 60 percent of our exports—over $1 trillion worth of goods and services—are purchased by APEC economies. That supports millions of American jobs.

So the work that APEC members have done together over the years has lowered tariffs, cut shipping costs, and made it cheaper, easier, and faster to do business, and that supports good jobs in all of our nations. We've worked together to improve food security, encourage clean energy, promote education, and deliver disaster relief. And all of this has made a difference.

But we can always do more. We can do more to reduce barriers to trade and economic growth. Since 2006, we've worked together towards the ultimate goal of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, and APEC has shown a number of pathways that could make it a reality. And one of those pathways is the Trans-Pacific Partnership between the United States and 11 other nations. Once complete, this partnership will bring nearly 40 percent of the global economy under an agreement that means increased trade, greater investment, and more jobs for its member countries; a level playing field on which businesses can compete; high standards that protect workers, the environment, and intellectual property. And I just met with several other members of the TPP who share my desire to make this agreement a reality. We're going to keep on working to get it done. For we believe that this is the model for trade in the 21st century.

Agreements like this will benefit our economies and our people. But they also send a strong message that what's important isn't just whether our economies continue to grow, but how they grow; that's what—that what's best for our people isn't a race to the bottom, but a race to the top. Obviously, ensuring the continued growth and stability of the Asia-Pacific requires more than a focus on growth on trade and investment.

Steady, sustainable growth requires making it easier for small businesses to access capital and new markets. And when about one-third of small businesses in the region are run by women, then steady, sustainable growth requires every woman's ability to fully participate in the economy. That's true in the United States; that's true everywhere.

Steady, sustainable growth requires promoting policies and practices that keep the Internet open and accessible.

Steady, sustainable growth requires a planet where citizens can breathe clean air and drink clean water and eat safe food and make a living fishing healthy oceans.

Steady, sustainable growth requires mobilizing the talents and resources of all our people, regardless of gender or religion or color or creed; offering them the opportunity to participate in open and transparent political and economic systems, where we cast a harsh light on bribery and corruption and a well-deserved spotlight on those who strive to play by the rules.

Those are all some of the areas we'll be focused on at APEC this week and going forward. And obviously, every country is different; no country is following the same model. But there are things that bind us together, and despite our differences, we know there are certain standards and ideals that will benefit all people.

We know that if given a choice, our young people would demand more access to the world's information, not less. We know that if allowed to organize, our workers would better—demand working conditions that don't injure them, that keep them safe; that they're looking for stronger labor and environmental safeguards, not weaker. We know that if given a voice, women wouldn't say give us less; they'd speak up for more access to more markets, more access to capital, more seats in our legislature and our boardrooms.

And so these are all key issues in growth as well. Sometimes, we focus just on trade and investment and dollars and cents, but these things are important as well. These ideals aren't just topics for summits and state visits, they're touchstones of the world that we're going to leave to our children. The United States is not just here in Asia to check a box, we're here because we believe our shared future is here in Asia, just as our shared past has been.

We're looking to a future where a worker in any of our countries can afford to provide for his family; where his daughter can go to school and start a business and have a fair shot at success; where fundamental rights are cherished and protected and not denied. And that future is one where our success is defined less by armies and less by bureaucrats, and more by entrepreneurs and innovators, by dreamers and doers, by business leaders who focus as much on the workers they empower as the prosperity that they create. That's the future that we seek. That's why we're here. It's why we've worked so closely together these past several years. And as long as I'm America's President, I'm going to be invested in your success because I believe it is essential to our success as well.

Thank you very much. *Xiè xie.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:51 p.m. at the China National Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Andrew N. Liveris, president, chairman, and chief executive officer, Dow Chemical Co. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; and the Information Technology Agreement (ITA).

Statement on Internet Neutrality
November 10, 2014

An open Internet is essential to the American economy and increasingly to our very way of life. By lowering the cost of launching a new idea, igniting new political movements, and bringing communities closer together, it has been one of the most significant democratizing influences the world has ever known.

"Net neutrality" has been built into the fabric of the Internet since its creation, but it is also a principle that we cannot take for granted. We cannot allow Internet service providers (ISPs) to restrict the best access or to pick winners and losers in the online marketplace for services and ideas. That is why today I am asking the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to answer the call of almost 4 million public comments and implement the strongest possible rules to protect net neutrality.

When I was a candidate for this office, I made clear my commitment to a free and open Internet, and my commitment remains as strong as ever. Four years ago, the FCC tried to implement rules that would protect net neutrality with little to no impact on the telecommunications companies that make important investments in our economy. After the rules were challenged, the court reviewing the rules agreed with the FCC that net neutrality was essential for preserving an environment that encourages new investment in the network, new online services and content, and everything else that makes up the Internet as we now know it. Unfortunately, the court ultimately struck down the rules, not because it disagreed with the need to protect net neutrality, but because it believed the FCC had taken the wrong legal approach.

The FCC is an independent agency, and ultimately this decision is theirs alone. I believe the FCC should create a new set of rules protecting net neutrality and ensuring that neither the cable company nor the phone company will be able to act as a gatekeeper, restricting what you can do or see online. The rules I am asking for are simple, commonsense steps that reflect the Internet you and I use every day and that some ISPs already observe. These bright-line rules include:

- *No blocking.* If a consumer requests access to a website or service, and the content is legal, your ISP should not be permitted to block it. That way, every player—not just those commercially affiliated with an ISP—gets a fair shot at your business.
- *No throttling.* Nor should ISPs be able to intentionally slow down some content or speed up others—through a process often called "throttling"—based on the type of service or your ISP's preferences.
- *Increased transparency.* The connection between consumers and ISPs—the so-called last mile—is not the only place some sites might get special treatment. So I am also asking the FCC to make full use of the transparency authorities the court recently upheld and, if necessary, to apply net neutrality rules to points of interconnection between the ISP and the rest of the Internet.
- *No paid prioritization.* Simply put: No service should be stuck in a "slow lane" because it does not pay a fee. That kind of gatekeeping would undermine the level playing field essential to the Internet's growth. So, as I have before, I am asking for an explicit ban on paid prioritization and any other restriction that has a similar effect.

If carefully designed, these rules should not create any undue burden for ISPs and can have clear, monitored exceptions for reasonable network management and for specialized services such as dedicated, mission-critical networks serving a hospital. But combined, these rules mean everything for preserving the Internet's openness.

The rules also have to reflect the way people use the Internet today, which increasingly means on a mobile device. I believe the FCC should make these rules fully applicable to mobile broadband as well, while recognizing the special challenges that come with managing wireless networks.

To be current, these rules must also build on the lessons of the past. For almost a century, our law has recognized that companies who connect you to the world have special obligations not to exploit the monopoly they enjoy over access in and out of your home or business. That is why a phone call from a customer of one phone company can reliably reach a customer of a different one and why you will

not be penalized solely for calling someone who is using another provider. It is common sense that the same philosophy should guide any service that is based on the transmission of information, whether a phone call or a packet of data.

So the time has come for the FCC to recognize that broadband service is of the same importance and must carry the same obligations as so many of the other vital services do. To do that, I believe the FCC should reclassify consumer broadband service under title II of the Telecommunications Act, while at the same time forbearing from rate regulation and other provisions less relevant to broadband services. This is a basic acknowledgment of the services ISPs provide to American homes and businesses and the straightforward obligations necessary to ensure the network works for everyone, not just one or two companies.

Investment in wired and wireless networks has supported jobs and made America the center of a vibrant ecosystem of digital devices, apps, and platforms that fuel growth and expand opportunity. Importantly, network investment remained strong under the previous net neutrality regime, before it was struck down by the court; in fact, the court agreed that protecting net neutrality helps foster more investment and innovation. If the FCC appropriately forbears from the title II regulations that are not needed to implement the principles above—principles that most ISPs have followed for years—it will help ensure new rules are consistent with incentives for further investment in the infrastructure of the Internet.

The Internet has been one of the greatest gifts our economy—and our society—has ever known. The FCC was chartered to promote competition, innovation, and investment in our networks. In service of that mission, there is no higher calling than protecting an open, accessible, and free Internet. I thank the Commissioners for having served this cause with distinction and integrity, and I respectfully ask them to adopt the policies I have outlined here, to preserve this technology's promise for today and future generations to come.

NOTE: A related video of remarks by the President was released by the White House Press Office, and no transcript was provided.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments for Fiscal Year 2015

November 10, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Budget amendments for the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of State and Other International Programs (State/OIP) to fund Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). These amendments would provide $5.6 billion for OCO activities to degrade and ultimately defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)—including military operations as part of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Accordingly, this request would provide $5.0 billion for DOD OCO activities in addition to the $58.6 billion DOD OCO request I submitted to the Congress in June 2014, and would result in a total DOD OCO request for FY 2015 of $63.6 billion. This amount is $15.8 billion less than the $79.4 billion placeholder for DOD OCO in the FY 2015 Budget. The request would also provide $520 million for State/OIP OCO activities, which is in addition to the $7.3 billion I requested for State/OIP OCO activities in the FY 2015 Budget and the June budget amendment.

The approach to counter ISIL has evolved with emerging requirements identified subsequent to the June OCO amendment, and therefore not previously requested. These amendments include the additional funding necessary to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy.

The details of these amendments are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks at the First Plenary Session of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Economic Leaders' Meeting in Beijing, China
November 11, 2014

[*President Obama's remarks were joined in progress.*]

——have shown us last night's events were spectacular, and this is a extraordinary setting for our meeting. And I very much appreciate the work that you've done to develop a very productive agenda during this year's APEC meeting.

I'd like to say to all my colleagues who are assembled here, it's good to be back with you at APEC. This forum has been able to provide an extraordinarily important forum for generating ideas that boost regional and then global integration and has helped to provide jobs and support growth in all of our economies.

Our meeting comes at a very important time for the global trading system. Just 1 year ago, we celebrated the conclusion of a historic trade facilitation agreement in Bali. As was just mentioned, that agreement has been breaking down over certain issues, although I'm actually confident that there's an opportunity for us to resolve them fairly soon. But it does underscore how challenging it is to maintain and continue to grow our multilateral trading system.

So we're going to need to focus on restoring and rebuilding the WTO's negotiating function. A strong multilateral trading system that holds us together and a common framework of rules has always been a bedrock of a healthy, global economy.

Meanwhile, APEC continues to play a central role in promoting economic integration through regional and bilateral trade agreements. If these agreements are ambitious, they can be stepping stones to greater integration rather than stumbling blocks.

APEC has been the incubator of ambitious trade agreements at the center of our agenda. This is where the trade facilitation agreement started. It was APEC's work that led to the Information Technology Agreement, the ITA, which we are now negotiating to expand. So it's fitting that we're here with our APEC colleagues to share the news that the United States and China have reached an understanding on the ITA that we hope will contribute to a rapid conclusion of the broader negotiations in Geneva. We think that's good news. And I very much thank President Xi's efforts in that regard.

APEC is often at its best and most effective on the more technologic—the more technical cooperation to boost the flow of goods and services across our borders. This is the small details, day to day, that remove bottlenecks to trade and reduce the cost of transactions.

In February, I signed an Executive order establishing a single window, for example, to speed the processing of cargo flows in and out of the United States. We welcome APEC's commitment to help all our economies streamline procedures and build capacity so we can meet our goals of reducing the time and the costs of border crossings by 10 percent by next year.

I want to welcome APEC's endorsement of ideas we discussed in Honolulu to create more transparent procedures for citizens and businesses to comment on proposed new regulations, which I think represents an important step forward for businesses that want to cooperate seamlessly across borders and jurisdictions.

These efforts are not always large and public; they don't always get a lot of attention. But they represent the important strides in

bringing our people closer together and making our economies stronger.

And finally, I want to commend China for focusing this year on what APEC can do to contribute to the realization of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific. The goal of FTAAP was announced in 2006, and as leaders noted, the many regional initiatives will contribute to the eventual realization. We see our engagement in the Trans-Pacific Partnership as a contribution towards that effort. I look forward to the day when all of our economies can be linked together in a high-standard, 21st-century agreement. And I think that the work and the efforts of President Xi in setting this agenda here today will help facilitate that. So we thank you very much, Mr. President, for your extraordinary hospitality.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10 a.m. at the Yanqi Lake International Conference Centre. In his remarks, he referred to Executive Order 13659, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Joint Statement—Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders' Declaration: Beijing Agenda for an Integrated, Innovative, and Interconnected Asia-Pacific

November 11, 2014

1. We, the APEC Leaders, gathered by Yanqi Lake in Beijing for the 22nd APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting. Under the theme of "Shaping the Future through Asia-Pacific Partnership", we held substantial discussions on the priorities of advancing regional economic integration, promoting innovative development, economic reform and growth, and strengthening comprehensive connectivity and infrastructure development with a view to expanding and deepening Asia-Pacific regional economic cooperation, and attaining peace, stability, development and common prosperity of the Asia-Pacific.

2. The Asia-Pacific region has experienced a quarter of a century's growth and development. APEC has not only made significant contributions to the region's economic development, social progress and improvement of people's livelihoods, but has also epitomized the great changes and rising strategic position of the Asia-Pacific. Through its unique approach featuring voluntary action, consensus, flexibility and pragmatism, APEC has successfully established a sound regional economic cooperation framework among member economies with remarkable diversity and at different stages of development. Adhering to the spirit of unity, mutual respect and trust, mutual assistance and win-win cooperation, we have been working to narrow the development gap among ourselves and have consistently promoted the robust, sustainable, balanced, inclusive and secure growth in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

3. After years of rapid development, the Asia-Pacific has become the most dynamic region of the world, and has never been as important as it is today in the global landscape. At present, the Asia-Pacific maintains a strong momentum of growth; it possesses an enormous potential and has a bright future. Yet it is also faced with risks and challenges.

4. We are at an important historical moment of building on past achievements and striving for new progress. We are committed to working together to shape the future through Asia-Pacific partnership, building an open economy in the Asia-Pacific featuring innovative development, interconnected growth, and shared interests, and consolidating the leading role of the Asia-Pacific in the world economy, with a goal of opening up new prospects for future cooperation and achieving common prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

5. To achieve the above-mentioned goals, we pledge to take the following actions:

I. Advancing Regional Economic Integration

Pursuing Free and Open Trade and Investment

6. We reiterate the value, centrality and primacy of the multilateral trading system in promoting trade expansion, economic growth, job creation and sustainable development. We stand firmly together to strengthen the rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading system as embodied in the WTO.

7. We express our grave concern regarding the impasse in the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) which has resulted in stalemate and uncertainties over other Bali decisions. These developments have affected the credibility of the WTO negotiating function. In finding solutions to the implementation of the Bali decisions, APEC will exert creative leadership and energy together with all WTO members in unlocking this impasse, putting all Bali decisions back on track, and proceeding with the formulation of Post-Bali Work Program, as a key stepping stone to concluding the Doha Round.

8. We reaffirm our pledges against all forms of protectionism. We extend our standstill commitment through the end of 2018 and reaffirm our commitment to roll back protectionist and trade-distorting measures. We remain committed to exercise maximum restraint in implementing measures that may be consistent with WTO provisions but have a significant protectionist effect, and to promptly rectifying such measures, where implemented.

9. We acknowledge that bilateral, regional and plurilateral trade agreements can play an important role in complementing global trade liberalization initiatives. We will continue to work together to ensure that they contribute to strengthening the multilateral trading system. We underscore the importance of the negotiations to expand the product coverage of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA). A final ITA expansion outcome should be commercially significant, credible, pragmatic, balanced, and reflective of the dynamic technological developments in the information technology sector over the last 17 years, and contribute to the multilateral trading system. We welcome APEC's leadership in advancing the negotiations and call for swift resumption and conclusion of plurilateral negotiations in Geneva. We welcome the launch of negotiations on Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA) in July 2014 in Geneva. We encourage participants of the above initiatives to seek expanded memberships.

10. We welcome the significant progress made toward achieving the Bogor Goals. We will make every effort to achieve the Bogor Goals by 2020. We also welcome the biennial Bogor Goals review this year. We urge all economies, particularly developed ones to deeply consider the conclusions of the Report on APEC's 2010 Economies' Progress towards the Bogor Goals and the 2012 and 2014 Bogor Goals Progress Report, and to take more concrete actions towards attaining the Bogor Goals.

11. Recognizing APEC has a critical role to play in shaping and nurturing regional economic integration, we agree that APEC should make more important and meaningful contributions as an incubator to translate the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) from a vision to reality. We reaffirm our commitment to the eventual FTAAP as a major instrument to further APEC's regional economic integration agenda.

12. In this regard, we decide to kick off and advance the process in a comprehensive and systematic manner towards the eventual realization of the FTAAP, and endorse *the Beijing Roadmap for APEC's Contribution to the Realization of the FTAAP (Annex A).* Through the implementation of this Roadmap, we decide to accelerate our efforts on realizing the FTAAP on the basis of the conclusion of the ongoing pathways, and affirm our commitment to the eventual realization of the FTAAP as early as possible by building on ongoing regional undertakings, which will contribute significantly to regional economic integration, sustained growth and common prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. We instruct Ministers and officials to undertake the specific actions and report the outcomes to track the achievements.

13. We welcome the establishment of a Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) Friends of the Chair Group on Strengthening Regional Economic Integration (REI) and Advancing FTAAP, and urge the Friends of the Chair Group to continue its work. We agree to launch a collective strategic study on issues related to the realization of the FTAAP, and instruct officials to undertake the study, consult stakeholders and report the result by the end of 2016.

14. We endorse the establishment of an APEC Information Sharing Mechanism on RTAs/FTAs. We highly commend the work on the implementation of the Action Plan Framework on Capacity Building Needs Initiatives (CBNI), and endorse the Action Plan Framework of the 2nd CBNI. We instruct officials to design targeted and tailor-made capacity building activities to narrow the gap of the capacities of APEC economies to facilitate the eventual realization of the FTAAP.

15. In addition to the above, we reaffirm the role of APEC in addressing next generation trade and investment issues and sectoral initiatives, and agree to accelerate "at the border" trade liberalization and facilitation efforts, improve the business environment "behind the border", and enhance regional connectivity "across the border" to accumulate more building blocks for the realization of the FTAAP. Therefore, we:

- reaffirm our commitment to reduce applied tariffs to five percent or less by the end of 2015 on the list of environmental goods that we endorsed in 2012 in Vladivostok. We call upon all economies to redouble their efforts in order to realize the economic and environmental benefits. We will instruct officials to report progress in achieving this ground-breaking commitment at our meeting next year in the Philippines. We welcome the work on capacity building on Environmental Goods (EGs) commitment implementation;
- welcome the inaugural meeting of the APEC Public Private Partnership on Environmental Goods and Services (PPEGS) on renewable and clean energy trade and investment, and endorse the APEC Statement on Promoting Renewable and Clean Energy (RCE) Trade and Investment;
- welcome the progress on exploring products which could contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth as part of our concrete commitment to rural development and poverty alleviation;
- endorse the Action Agenda on Promoting Infrastructure Investment through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and instruct officials to take concrete actions to strengthen cooperation on PPP to promote more robust and sustainable infrastructure investment and development in the APEC region;
- welcome the Case Studies on Sustainable Investment in the APEC Region and encourage officials to consider and draw experience and good practices from the nominated cases to promote sustainable cross-border investment;
- endorse the APEC Cross Border E-Commerce Innovation and Development Initiative and encourage economies to designate or establish Research Centers of Cross-border E-commerce Innovation and Development on a voluntary basis;
- recognize that the effective protection and enforcement of IPR including trade secrets incentivizes and facilitates innovation and foreign direct investment and the dissemination of technology through licensing and partnerships;
- endorse the APEC Action Agenda on Advertising Standards and Practice Development to promote alignment of advertising standards and reduce the cost of doing business across the region;
- endorse the Asia-Pacific Region Automotive Industry Sustainable Development Declaration and welcome the outcomes of the 2014 APEC Regulatory Coopera-

tion Advancement Mechanism (ARCAM) Dialogue on Electric Vehicle Standards. We welcome the APEC Actions to Promote the Widespread Usage of Electric Vehicles.

Advancing Global Value Chain Development and Supply Chain Connectivity

16. Recognizing that Global Value Chains (GVCs) have become a dominant feature of the global economy and offer new prospects for growth, competitiveness and job creation for APEC economies at all levels of development, we endorse *the APEC Strategic Blueprint for Promoting Global Value Chain Development and Cooperation (Annex B).* We welcome the progress made in the measurement of Trade in Value Added (TiVA), services, SMEs and GVCs resilience, etc., and instruct officials to advance the work through the CTI Friends of the Chair Group on GVC to put forward new initiatives under the Strategic Blueprint in 2015 and beyond.

17. We endorse the Strategic Framework on Measurement of APEC TiVA under GVCs and the Action Plan on this Strategic Framework. We instruct the newly-formed technical group to work closely with the WTO, OECD, the World Bank, UNCTAD and other related international organizations, with an aim to complete the construction of the APEC TiVA Database by 2018.

18. We endorse the Terms of Reference of Promoting SME's Integration into GVCs, and welcome the launch of the related activities. We instruct officials to make efforts in advancing this work.

19. We welcome the commitment of APEC economies to move forward with the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, including the notification by many APEC developing economies of their category A TFA obligations. We welcome, as well, the progress this year in improving the performance of APEC supply chains through targeted, focused capacity building and technical assistance. In this regard, we applaud the establishment of the APEC Alliance for Supply Chain Connectivity, which will contribute to our goal in achieving a ten percent improvement of supply chain performance by the end of 2015 and our broader supply chain connectivity objectives. We encourage economies to increase the resources of the APEC Supply Chain Connectivity Sub-Fund to ensure that our capacity building and technical assistance projects succeed to meet our ten percent performance improvement goal and to further our trade facilitation objectives.

20. We agree to establish the Asia-Pacific Model E-port Network (APMEN) and welcome the first batch of APEC Model E-ports nominated by the APEC economies. We endorse the Terms of Reference of the APMEN and agree to set up the APMEN operational center in the Shanghai Model E-port, and instruct officials to make further efforts to contribute to regional trade facilitation and supply chain connectivity.

21. We positively value the APEC High-level Roundtable on Green Development and its declaration, and agree to establish the APEC Cooperation Network on Green Supply Chain. We endorse the establishment of the first pilot center of APEC Cooperation Network on Green Supply Chain in Tianjin, China, and encourage other economics to establish the pilot centers and advance related work actively.

22. We endorse the APEC Customs 3M (Mutual Recognition of Control, Mutual Assistance of Enforcement and Mutual Sharing of Information) Strategic Framework. We instruct officials to further simplify and coordinate APEC customs procedures based on the 3M Framework to facilitate the development of regional trade. We encourage APEC members' customs authorities to continue strengthening cooperation and coordination in pursuit of the 3M vision, to push forward comprehensive connectivity and make greater contributions to the sustainable development of trade and regional economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region.

23. We recognize that the use of standardized codes will enable information about traded goods to be easily understood and shared by all parties. We therefore encourage APEC economies to work with the private sector to

promote further cooperation on global data standards and their wider use by developing pilot projects.

24. We welcome the initiative on manufacturing related services in supply chains/value chains as a next generation trade and investment issue, and instruct officials to develop a plan of action in 2015.

Strengthening Economic and Technical Cooperation

25. We endorse the APEC Strategic Plan on Capacity Building to Promote Trade and Investment Agenda which adopts a strategic, goal-oriented and multi-year approach. We instruct officials to take the Strategic Plan as a guide to develop and implement more tailor-made capacity building programs that contribute to the core trade and investment liberalization and facilitation agenda of APEC.

26. We encourage economies, particularly developed economies, to provide more contributions to ECOTECH and capacity building, to achieve our goal of bridging development gaps, and help member economies to meet their APEC commitments and their economic growth objectives.

27. We welcome the initiative to upgrade the Asia Pacific Finance and Development Center (AFDC) to the Asia Pacific Finance and Development Institute (AFDI).

II. Promoting Innovative Development, Economic Reform and Growth

28. We realize that the prospects for the shared prosperity of APEC will depend on innovative development, economic reform and growth in the region, which are complementary and mutually reinforcing. We recognize that the Asia-Pacific region is at a crucial stage of economic transformation. We are committed to accelerating the pace of reform and innovation, and exploring new growth areas with the goal of bolstering the position of the Asia-Pacific as an engine for world economic growth. We agree to strengthen macroeconomic policy coordination with a view to forging policy synergy, and creating a sound policy environment for the robust, sustainable, balanced and inclusive economic growth in the region.

29. We endorse *the APEC Accord on Innovative Development, Economic Reform and Growth (Annex C)* which identifies Economic Reform, New Economy, Innovative Growth, Inclusive Support and Urbanization as the five pillars for promoting experience sharing, policy dialogue, capacity building and practical cooperation.

Economic Reform

30. To advance APEC's economic reform agenda, we agree to hold the 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Structural Reform in 2015. Recognizing that many APEC developing economies are facing the challenge of the Middle-Income Trap (MIT), we agree to incorporate the issue of overcoming the MIT into the work program of the APEC Economic Committee.

31. To meet our objective of strengthening the implementation of good regulatory practices, we will further enhance communication, exchanges, and sharing of experiences, and foster an open and transparent regulatory environment in our economies, according to individual economies' needs and circumstances. We will endeavor to take new actions through the use of information technology and the Internet to improve our conduct of public consultations on proposed regulations.

32. We recognize the role of internationally recognized private international law instruments such as the Hague Conventions in facilitating cross-border trade and investment, enhancing ease of doing business, and fostering effective enforcement of contracts and efficient settlement of business disputes. We encourage wider use of these instruments which would contribute to APEC's regional integration, connectivity and structural reform agenda.

New Economy

33. We recognize that New Economy represents the trend of economic growth and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. We support the efforts to promote economic restructuring and upgrad-

ing in traditional industries, explore new and promising economic growth areas such as the Green Economy, the Blue Economy, and the Internet Economy, and promote green, circular, low-carbon and energy-efficient development.

34. We are encouraged by the progress of APEC's ocean-related cooperation and welcome the Xiamen Declaration issued at the 4th APEC Oceans Ministerial Meeting this year, and instruct our Ministers and officials to fully implement the Declaration. We acknowledge the Xiamen Declaration's statement on the Blue Economy. We welcome the APEC Marine Sustainable Development Report. We encourage the Ocean and Fisheries Working Group to work with APEC fora to advance Blue Economy cooperation.

35. We recognize the role of the Internet Economy in promoting innovative development and empowering economic participation. We endorse the APEC Initiative of Cooperation to Promote the Internet Economy and instruct Ministers and officials to discuss the Internet Economy further, put forward proposals for actions, promote member economies' cooperation on developing the Internet Economy and facilitate technological and policy exchanges among member economies, taking into account the need to bridge the digital divide.

36. We welcome the Beijing Declaration of the 2014 APEC Energy Ministerial Meeting. We welcome the establishment of the APEC Sustainable Energy Center in China. We recognize the importance of promoting diversified energy supplies, and market-based competition and pricing mechanisms that reflect demand and supply fundamentals as appropriate to each economy. We encourage member economies to take actions to eliminate trade protection and restrictive measures that may impede progress in renewable energy technologies and development of this sector, and we endorse the Energy Ministers' aspirational goal to double the share of renewables including in power generation by 2030 in APEC's energy mix. We affirm our commitment to rationalize and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption while still providing essential energy services. We acknowledge Peru and New Zealand for initiating voluntary peer reviews in 2014 of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that cause wasteful consumption and sharing their best practices, and welcome the commitment from the Philippines to undergo a peer review in 2015. We encourage innovation, competition and cooperation to promote a sound and sustainable energy sector in the Asia-Pacific and to ensure its energy security, economic growth, poverty eradication and an appropriate response to climate change.

37. We emphasize the importance of efforts to ensure sustainable development in mining, including the development, processing, utilization, investment and trade in minerals, metals and related products and welcome Ministers' views recognizing the important role of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

38. We will continue our efforts to protect forest resources, combat illegal logging and associated trade, promote sustainable forest management, and work with relevant organizations, including the Asia-Pacific Network on Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet), to ensure the achievement of the aspirational goal on forests in the Sydney Declaration.

39. We commit to continue our efforts in combating wildlife trafficking. We will take steps to combat wildlife trafficking by enhancing international cooperation through Wildlife Enforcement Networks (WENs) and other existing mechanisms, reducing the supply of and demand for illegally traded wildlife, increasing public awareness and education related to wildlife trafficking and its impacts, and treating wildlife trafficking crimes seriously.

Innovative Growth

40. We recognize innovation as an important lever for economic growth and structural reform. We endorse the initiative on Toward Innovation-Driven Development. We commit to foster a pragmatic, efficient and vigorous partnership on science, technology and innovation. We agree to strengthen collaboration amongst

government, academia, and private sector stakeholders to build science capacity, to promote an enabling environment for innovation and including by establishing training centers for the commercialization of research, and to enhance regional science and technology connectivity, with respect for intellectual property rights and trade secrets.

41. We welcome the Nanjing Declaration on Promoting SMEs Innovative Development. We commit to strengthen our support, and provide an enabling environment for SMEs in innovation activities. We welcome efforts to strengthen SMEs' cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, involve SMEs in APEC production and supply chains, promote ethical business practices, as well as to empower their capacity to operate in an international market. We welcome member economies' joint efforts and contribution to promote the APEC Accelerator Network and to invest in the early stage development of innovative SMEs.

Inclusive support

42. We recognize that inclusive support is essential to maintain growth and to deal with risks and potential fallout of reform, with an aim to provide a solid foundation for economic growth and to address the needs of vulnerable groups. We welcome the outcomes of the 6th Human Resources Development Ministerial Meeting and the Action Plan (2015–2018) on Promoting Quality Employment and Strengthening People-to-People Connectivity through Human Resources Development. We encourage APEC economies to give priority to stabilizing and expanding employment, implementing macroeconomic policies in favor of job creation, and strengthening capacity building for human resources development, vocational skills development and skill training for youth. We commend the 10-year achievement of the APEC Digital Opportunity Center initiative through our joint efforts and cooperation in bridging digital divides, strengthening human resource development and creating digital opportunities throughout the APEC region.

43. We recognize the pivotal role of women in the development and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific, and are committed to taking concrete policies and innovative measures to further enhance women's economic empowerment and their access to markets and ICT technology, eliminate all barriers that hinder women's economic participation, and ensure women's equal opportunities, participation and benefit in innovative development, economic reform and growth. We welcome the recommendations from the Women and the Economy Forum, and commit to promote women entrepreneurship. We recognize the importance of data to measure progress in reducing barriers to women's economic participation, and we welcome the establishment of the APEC Women and the Economy Dashboard as a tool to inform policy discussions. We support women's leadership and recognize the importance of women's entrepreneurship support services and networks. We encourage the formal development of an APEC-wide women's entrepreneurship network to empower women entrepreneurs to start and grow businesses and increase their access to domestic and international markets.

44. We welcome recommendations from the 4th High Level Meeting on Health and the Economy and endorse the "Healthy Asia-Pacific 2020" initiative, which aims to achieve sustainable and high-performing health systems that will ensure people's health, including physical and mental well-being, through the whole life-course by means of a whole-of-government, and whole-of-society approach with the collaboration of the entire Asia-Pacific region.

45. We commit to jointly tackle pandemic diseases, terrorism, natural disasters, climate change and other global challenges. In confronting the current Ebola Virus Disease epidemic, we are determined to intensify our cooperation and work shoulder to shoulder with African nations to help them effectively end this epidemic and prevent, detect, manage and respond to future outbreaks. We will continue to assist people in affected areas to overcome this crisis and build back their economies so we can win the battle against the disease.

46. We endorse the Beijing Declaration on APEC Food Security issued at the Third APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security. We welcome APEC Action Plan for Reducing Food Loss and Waste, the APEC Food Security Business Plan (2014–2020), and the APEC Food Security Roadmap toward 2020 (2014 version) and the Action Plan to Enhance Connectivity of APEC Food Standards and Safety Assurance. We note the G20's work on food security in 2014. We call on APEC economies to seek common ground to build an open, inclusive, mutually-beneficial and all-win partnership for the long-term food security of the Asia-Pacific region. We will strengthen APEC agricultural science and technology innovation and cooperation to advance sustainable agricultural development and support sustainable fisheries.

47. We commend the ongoing efforts of the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF) and its Partnership Training Institute Network (PTIN), which will help ensure the safety of food produced and traded in the APEC region by improving food safety regulatory systems, encouraging harmonization with international science-based standards, building capacity in areas that will facilitate trade, and enhancing communication and collaboration between industry and regulators to address emerging food safety issues. We welcome the APEC Food Safety Beijing Statement of the 2014 APEC High-Level Regulator Industry Dialogue on Food Safety.

48. We commend the strong resolve shown in fighting corruption, including through effective anti-corruption measures. We support the Beijing Declaration on Fighting Corruption and welcome the APEC Principles on the Prevention of Bribery and Enforcement of Anti-Bribery Laws, and APEC General Elements of Effective Voluntary Corporate Compliance Programs. We commit to work together against corruption and deny safe haven for corrupt officials and their illicitly-acquired assets. We are committed to strengthening cooperation and coordination on repatriation or extradition of corrupt officials as well as confiscation and recovery of corruption proceeds, and where appropriate, through the use of anti-corruption mechanisms and platforms such as the APEC Network of Anti-Corruption and Law Enforcement Agencies (ACT–NET).

49. We encourage further cooperation of member economies in disaster preparedness, risk reduction, response and post-disaster recovery, and cooperation in search and rescue, including through more robust networking among disaster management departments; following the APEC Guidelines on Appropriate Donations; improving supply chain resiliency; operationalizing the Trade Recovery Programme, reducing barriers to the movement of emergency responders and humanitarian relief across borders; increased data sharing; and application of science and technologies.

50. We reiterate our resolve to create a secure and resilient environment for economic activities and connectivity in the APEC region and continue concerted efforts to implement the APEC Consolidated Counter-Terrorism and Secure Trade Strategy.

Urbanization

51. We recognize that the Asia-Pacific is currently experiencing booming urbanization. We realize that sustained and healthy development of urbanization is conducive to promoting innovative growth and realizing robust, inclusive and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific.

52. We commend the constructive work undertaken by APEC this year in promoting urbanization cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, and endorse the APEC Cooperation Initiative for Jointly Establishing an Asia-Pacific Urbanization Partnership.

53. Recognizing the range of urbanization challenges and opportunities across APEC economies, we commit to collectively promote cooperation projects, and to further explore pathways to a new-type of urbanization and sustainable city development, featuring green, energy efficient, low-carbon and people-orientation.

III. Strengthening Comprehensive Connectivity and Infrastructure Development

54. We recognize that strengthening comprehensive connectivity and infrastructure development will help open up new sources of economic growth, promote cooperation and mutual assistance, and advance prosperity and the spirit of community in the Asia-Pacific region. We commend the achievements already made by APEC in connectivity and infrastructure development cooperation.

55. We endorse the *APEC Connectivity Blueprint for 2015–2025 (Annex D).* We are committed to implementing the APEC Connectivity Blueprint and achieving the overarching goal of strengthening physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity by taking agreed actions and meeting agreed targets by 2025, with the objective of achieving a seamless and comprehensively connected and integrated Asia Pacific.

56. We commit to solve the financing bottleneck of infrastructure development. We commend the work and progress accomplished under the APEC Finance Ministers' Process (FMP) in infrastructure investment and financing cooperation. We recognize, in particular, efforts in promoting PPP on Infrastructure, such as compiling demonstrative infrastructure PPP projects, advancing the work of the PPP Experts Advisory Panel, strengthening capacity building of Indonesia's Pilot PPP Center, and carrying on capacity building project of PPP pilot demonstration and standard contract making. We welcome the Implementation Roadmap to Develop Successful Infrastructure PPP Projects in the APEC Region to guide APEC's future work in this aspect. We welcome the establishment of the PPP Center in China as a center of excellence.

57. We encourage member economies to strengthen energy infrastructural development and connectivity, such as oil and natural gas pipelines and transmission networks, LNG terminals, smart grids and distributed energy systems on the basis of shared interest and mutual benefit.

58. We encourage all member economies to take effective measures to promote the mobility of business personnel, tourists, researchers, students and labor in the region.

59. We support initiatives and activities that further enhance the three dimensions of cross-border education cooperation found in the 2012 Leaders Declaration—mobility of students, researchers, and providers. We applaud the work that has been accomplished this year, including the establishment of the APEC Higher Education Research Center (AHERC); contributions to the APEC scholarships and internships initiative, which will encourage people-to-people exchange in our region; and promotion of virtual academic mobility by leveraging internet-based resources and innovative learning practices.

60. We support the target set at the 8th APEC Tourism Ministers' Meeting of making efforts to receive 800 million international tourist arrivals in APEC economies by 2025.

61. We appreciate the initiatives which will greatly improve connectivity and infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region, help resolve the bottleneck of financing in this field, and promote regional economic integration and the common development of the Asia-Pacific.

IV. Looking Forward

62. With joint efforts of member economies, the Asia-Pacific has become the most dynamic region of the world with enormous growth potential. Never before has the world been more in need of a harmonious, stable and prosperous Asia-Pacific. We commit to working together to shape the future through Asia-Pacific partnership in the spirit of mutual respect and trust, inclusiveness, and win-win cooperation, and making a contribution to the long-term development and common prosperity of the region.

63. We commit to carry forward APEC reform, improve its cooperation mechanisms, and implement ambitious goals and blueprints, with the aim of enabling APEC to play a more active coordinating and leading role in the Asia-Pacific.

64. We commend the constructive role of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) in strengthening public-private partnership and promoting APEC cooperation in various fields.

65. We are committed to enhancing APEC synergy with other relevant international and regional cooperation organizations and fora through coordination and cooperation, as well as enabling APEC to play an increasingly important role in the global governance system.

66. We are satisfied with the positive, meaningful and fruitful achievements of this meeting and appreciate China's tremendous and fruitful efforts to successfully host this meeting.

67. We are committed to supporting future hosts of APEC, including Peru, Viet Nam, Papua New Guinea, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand and Thailand who are to host APEC in the years of 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 respectively.

68. We look forward to convening again during the Philippines' hosting of APEC in 2015.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on the Death of John M. Doar
November 11, 2014

Michelle and I were saddened to hear of the passing of John Doar, one of the bravest American lawyers of his or any era. As the face of the Justice Department in the segregated South, John escorted James Meredith to the University of Mississippi. He walked alongside the Selma-to-Montgomery March. He laid the groundwork for the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. Time and time again, John put his life on the line to make real our country's promise of equal rights for all. Without John's courage and perseverance, Michelle and I might not be where we are today, and our thoughts and prayers are with his children, his grandchildren, and all those who loved and admired him.

NOTE: The statement referred to Robert, Michael, Burke, and Mary Gael Doar, children of the late Mr. Doar.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Xi Jinping of China in Beijing, China
November 12, 2014

Well, Mr. President, it is a pleasure to be back in China. I congratulate you and the people of China for hosting a successful APEC summit. I am grateful for your outstanding hospitality and the honor of this state visit.

This is the 35th anniversary of diplomatic ties between our two countries, as you noted. Since then, the trade and ties, the people-to-people exchanges between our countries have surged. And we've shown that when we cooperate, the United States and China can make important contributions to security and to progress in this region and around the world.

And this visit is an opportunity to continue discussions President Xi and I began in California last year and our meetings since. Yesterday evening and this morning we had the chance to discuss in depth our priorities and our vision for the U.S.-China relationship. As I've said before, I strongly believe that our two nations have an enormous stake in each other's success. America's presence in the Asia-Pacific, I believe, has benefited China. Conversely, a growing China has become one of our largest trading partners. As I said in my speech on Monday, the United States welcomes a China that is peaceful, prosperous, and stable, and I look forward to continuing the discussion with President Xi on areas where our countries can work together even more.

As we've noted, there are important differences that we have, both practically as well as our vision for our respective countries and our conduct of foreign policy. But what I've been very encouraged by is your willingness, Mr. President, to engage in a honest and constructive dialogue around those differences and ensuring that we manage them in a peaceful and effective way.

So I want to thank you and the Chinese people for your extraordinary hospitality. I look forward to our discussions and to ensuring that the U.S.-China relationship continues to deliver results for China, for the United States, and for the world. *Xiè xie.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the Great Hall of the People.

The President's News Conference With President Xi Jinping of China in Beijing

November 12, 2014

President Xi. Honorable President Obama, distinguished guests, dear friends from the press, good morning. First of all, I wish to once again warmly welcome President Obama to China for this state visit.

Over the past 2 days, I had a constructive and productive discussion with President Obama. We had sincere and in-depth exchange of views and reached broad agreement on China-U.S. relations, major international and regional issues of shared interest, as well as on global issues.

We reaffirmed the agreement that we reached at the Annenberg Estate on developing the bilateral relations. We agreed to continue to advance the development of a new model of major-country relations between China and United States. We had in-depth discussions on the priority areas for advancing such relationship. We agreed to accelerate the negotiations of the BIT, and we'll make efforts to reach agreement on the core issues and the major articles of the treaty text and to initiate the negative list of negotiations in 2015.

We have reached agreement on the ITA expansion negotiations, and we are ready to work together for the early conclusion of relevant plural-lateral talks. We fully recognize the document signed between the two departments of defense on building two major confidence-building measures and agreed to continue to deepen military exchanges, mutual trust, and cooperation on that basis and develop a new the various fields and promote the long-term type of military-to-military relations between the two countries.

We issued a joint statement on climate change and jointly announced our respective post-2020 targets. We agreed to make sure that international climate change negotiations will reach an agreement as scheduled at the Paris conference in 2015, and we agreed to deepen practical cooperation on clean energy, environment protection, and other areas.

We reaffirmed our firm opposition to terrorism of all forms and agreed to strengthen counterterrorism cooperation on intelligence sharing, terrorist financing, and cyber terrorism. And we will work together to remove the threats of various terrorists and extremist forces.

We agreed to make use of such channels as a meeting between the Chinese Ministry of Public Security and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to have further discussions on law enforcement cooperation, which includes cracking down on transnational crimes, fugitives hunting, and recovery of criminal proceeds.

We have reached reciprocal arrangements on the visa for business travelers, tourists, and students. We have agreed to issue 10-year, multiple-entry visas for respective business travelers and tourists and 5-year, multiple-entry visas for each other's students. This will greatly promote people-to-people exchanges between our two countries and will help to promote our exchange and the cooperation in development of bilateral relations.

We agreed to follow such principles as mutual respect, seeking common ground while sharing differences, exchanges, and mutual learning, and manage our differences on sensitive issues in a constructive way so as to ensure the healthy and steady growth of the bilateral ties.

I told President Obama that China has proposed the Asian security concept at the CICA summit in May in order to encourage Asian countries to build common security in an inclusive and cooperative spirit. At the same time, I also said that the Pacific Ocean is broad enough to accommodate the development of both China and the United States, and our two countries should work together to contribute to security in Asia.

These are mutually complementary efforts instead of mutually exclusive ones. China and the U.S. should continue to enhance dialogue and the coordination on Asia-Pacific affairs and respect and accommodate each other's interests and concerns in this region and develop inclusive coordination.

I also introduced to President Obama China's initiatives of establishing the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund. Underdeveloped infrastructure is the main bottleneck of obstructing the economic development in Asia. China has initiated the AIIB in order to offer support and facility to regional infrastructure development. These proposals and initiatives are open and inclusive in Asia; they are not exclusive. We welcome the active participation of the United States and other relevant countries so that together we can promote and share prosperity and peace in Asia-Pacific.

We recognize the positive actions both have taken in helping African countries affected by the Ebola virus to fight against the disease. We indicated that, based on the actual needs of African countries, we will leverage our respective strength and work with the rest of the international community to help affected countries to strengthen capacity-building on health and epidemic prevention so as to place the epidemic under control as soon as possible.

I thank President Obama and the U.S. team for their support to China's hosting of the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting. Both are willing to strengthen coordination and cooperation on multilateral forums, including APEC and G–20, and to play a positive role in promoting global economic recovery and development.

China and the United States have worked closely on the negotiations of the Iranian nuclear issue, and we hope that relevant parties would persist in consensus, address differences, and make political decisions so as to promote the early conclusion of a win-win and a comprehensive agreement. China is firmly committed to achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to peace and the stability on the Korean Peninsula. We intend that we should address the Korean Peninsula issue through dialogue and negotiations. Relevant parties should have active contacts and dialogue so as to create conditions for the early launch—for the relaunch of the six-party talks. And the two sides also agreed to continue their exchange and the cooperation on the Afghan issue.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, China is ready to work with the United States to make efforts in a number of priority areas and put into effect such principles as nonconfrontation, nonconflict, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation. And with unwavering spirit and unremitting efforts, we will promote new progress in building a new type—model of major-country relations between the two countries so as to bring greater benefits to our two peoples and two countries.

Thank you.

Moderator. Thank you, President Xi. I now give the floor to President Obama.

President Obama. Well, thank you, President Xi, for welcoming me and my delegation to Beijing and for the extraordinary hospitality that you and the Chinese people have shown to me on this state visit. I also want to take this

opportunity to thank the people of China for the warmth and kindness they showed my wife Michelle and our daughters, as well as my mother-in-law, when they came to visit China earlier this year, another sign of the enduring friendship between our peoples.

This year marks the 35th anniversary of diplomatic relations between our two nations. I'm told that Deng Xiaoping said that we must "seek truth from facts." On this anniversary, it is a fact that the past three-and-a-half decades have seen an extraordinary growth in the ties between our two countries: more trade, more collaborations between our businesses and scientists and researchers, more connections between the Chinese and the American people, from tourists to our students. And it is a fact that when we work together, it's good for the United States, it's good for China, and it is good for the world.

As I've said many times, the United States welcomes the continuing rise of a China that is peaceful, prosperous, and stable and that plays a responsible role in the world. And we don't just welcome it, we support it. For decades, America's engagement in the Asia-Pacific, including our alliances and our stabilizing presence, have been a foundation for the region's progress, including contributing to China's remarkable economic growth. The United States has worked to expand trade and investment with China and to help integrate China into the global economy. And we want that progress to continue because, as I said before, it benefits all of us.

I believe that President Xi and I have a common understanding about how the relationship between our nations can move forward. We agree that we can expand our cooperation where our interests overlap or align. When we have disagreements, we will be candid and clear about our intentions, and we will work to narrow those differences where possible. Even as we compete and disagree in some areas, I believe we can continue to advance the security and prosperity of our people and people around the world. That's my vision for how we can develop the relationship between our countries. That's the vision that we've advanced during this visit, which has taken our bilateral, regional, and global cooperation to a new level. And I want to thank President Xi for his leadership in fostering that kind of atmosphere of cooperation.

First, President Xi and I agreed on the importance of continuing to exercise—to increase the trade that helps grow our economies and creates jobs. More U.S. exports to a growing China means more opportunities for American businesses, workers, and farmers. We agreed to work actively on a comprehensive bilateral investment treaty with high standards. And that provides the opportunity for Chinese businesses to invest in the United States, as well as opening up the opportunity for more U.S. businesses to invest here in China, creating jobs for both our countries.

We reached an understanding that will allow us to work with other nations to conclude the Information Technology Agreement, which will help us boost trade in the computer and IT products that power the 21st-century economy. We agreed to work together to promote innovation in agricultural and food security to help feed a growing planet. And our agreement to extend visas for businesspeople, tourists, and students will help fuel growth and create jobs for Americans and Chinese.

I told President Xi that we welcome reforms being discussed here that would give the market a defining role in the Chinese economy. At the same time, I did emphasize the need for a level playing field so foreign companies can compete fairly, including against Chinese state-owned enterprises. I stressed the importance of protecting intellectual property as well as trade secrets, especially against cyber threats. And we welcomed continued progress towards a market-driven exchange rate.

Second, as the world's two largest economies, energy consumers, and emitters of greenhouse gases, we have a special responsibility to lead the global effort against climate change. That's why today I am proud that we can announce a historic agreement. I commend President Xi, his team, and the Chinese Government for the commitment they are making to slow, peak, and then reverse the course of China's carbon emissions.

Today I can also announce that the United States has set a new goal of reducing our net greenhouse gas emissions by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by the year 2025. This is an ambitious goal, but it is an achievable goal. It will double the pace at which we're reducing carbon pollution in the United States. It puts us on a path to achieving the deep emissions reductions by advanced economies that the scientific community says is necessary to prevent the most catastrophic effects of climate change. It will help improve public health. It will grow our economy. It will create jobs. It will strengthen our energy security, and it will put both of our nations on the path to a low-carbon economy.

This is a major milestone in the U.S.-China relationship, and it shows what's possible when we work together on an urgent global challenge. In addition, by making this announcement today, together, we hope to encourage all major economies to be ambitious—all countries, developing and developed—to work across some of the old divides so we can conclude a strong global climate agreement next year.

Third, with respect to regional security, we agreed to a number of new measures to improve communications between our militaries in order to reduce the risk of accidents or miscalculations on the seas and in the air. President Xi and I reaffirmed our commitment to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and we agree that North Korea will not succeed in pursuing nuclear weapons and economic development, that it can't have both.

While the United States does not take a position on competing claims in the East and South China Seas, I made it clear that we do have a fundamental interest in freedom of navigation and that territorial disputes in the region should be resolved peacefully, in accordance with international law. And I congratulated President Xi on the initial contacts with Prime Minister Abe of Japan to help lower tensions with respect to that issue.

I reaffirmed my strong commitment to our "one China" policy based on the three joint communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act. And we encourage further progress by both sides of the Taiwan Strait towards building ties, reducing tensions, and promoting stability on the basis of dignity and respect, which is in the interest of both sides as well as the region and the United States.

Fourth, I welcomed China's contributions to international security. This includes our mutual support for a stable, unified Afghanistan; our mutual interest in seeing the terrorist group ISIL is destroyed; the potential work we can do together in other counterterrorism activities, including those that were raised by President Xi; our mutual efforts as part of the P5-plus-1 to reach a comprehensive solution that ensures Iran's nuclear program is exclusively peaceful.

We agree that Iran should seize this historic opportunity by making the tough choices that are necessary to achieve a lasting diplomatic solution. And in addition, the United States is very appreciative of China's important contributions in West Africa in the fight against Ebola. We agreed to expand our cooperation against infectious diseases more broadly and to promote access to electricity across Africa, more examples of the difference we can make when we work together.

And finally, I reiterated to President Xi, as I have before, that America's unwavering support for fundamental human rights of all people will continue to be an important element of our relationship with China, just as it is with all the countries that we interact with around the world. And we had a very healthy exchange around these issues. President Xi gave me his sense of how China is moving forward. I described to him why it is so important for us to speak out for the freedoms that we believe are universal, rights that we believe are the birthright of all men and women, wherever they live, whether it is in New York or Paris or Hong Kong.

We think history shows that nations that uphold these rights—including for ethnic and religious minorities—are ultimately more prosperous, more successful, and more able to achieve the dreams of their people. In that context, I did note that we recognize Tibet as

part of the People's Republic of China. We are not in favor of independence. But we did encourage Chinese authorities to take steps to preserve the unique cultural, religious, and linguistic identity of the Tibetan people.

In closing, I want to say that I am pleased that we continue to expand the ties between our peoples. The new visa extension that begins today will bring more Chinese tourists to the United States and more American tourists to see the magnificent sights of China. That will encourage more exchanges among our students. We welcome more Chinese students to the United States than from any other country. And I'm proud that this summer, my "100,000 Strong" program reached our goal of more than 100,000 Americans studying in China in recent years. With these visa extensions, we'll give more students this opportunity, both Chinese and American.

So every day, our people are coming to know each other better. Every day, our young people are forging friendships that will serve our countries for many decades to come. Every day, some of the barriers of mistrust are broken down, mutual understanding is promoted. And that lays the seeds for cooperation, not just today, but for future generations.

So, President Xi, thank you again for your hospitality, for the candid and very productive conversations, for your hosting of an excellent APEC summit, and for our work together.

As Deng Xiaoping said, we must seek facts from—"seek truth from facts." The truth is that we have made important progress today for the benefit of both of our nations and for the benefit of the world. The truth is that even more progress is possible as we continue to develop this important relationship. I am confident that we will be able to do so. So thank you. *Xiè xie.*

We've agreed, I believe, to take a question from the press.

Moderator. Thank you, both Presidents. Now the two Presidents have agreed to each take a question from the press. Now, first President Obama will take a question from a member of the American press.

White House Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest. The first question will be from Mark Landler of the New York Times.

President Obama. Where's Mark? There he is.

Portrayals of the U.S. and President Obama by the Chinese Press/Hong Kong/China-U.S. Relations/China-Japan Relations

Q. Thank you very much, President Xi and President Obama. My first question is to President Obama. You've spoken a lot over the past few days about the potential of China as a partner for the United States and have concluded several agreements this week that attest to that. At the same time, there has been a surge of anti-American rhetoric in China in recent weeks, particularly in the state media. Chinese newspapers have disparaged your leadership style and have fueled speculation that the United States is a black hand behind the protests in Hong Kong. My question is whether you're concerned that this anti-American rhetoric could impede the kind of collaboration that you wish to have with China. And to what do you attribute that?

And if I may, because I want to make sure I grab my chance with the President of China, ask a couple of questions of him. Mr. President, President Obama has sketched out a strategic pivot to Asia that includes shoring up alliances with American allies like Japan and South Korea, deploying Marines to Australia, negotiating a regional trade pact that at the moment excludes China, and speaking up—as he did just a moment ago—on territorial disputes between China and its neighbors. Several months ago in Shanghai at a conference, you said it is for the Asians to run the affairs of Asia. I wonder whether you're concerned that this strategic pivot represents an effort to contain China.

And then, if I may, lastly, on a parochial issue——

President Obama. Come on, Mark.

Q. ——on a parochial issue, several news organizations from the United States have had issues with residency permits in China being denied, including the New York Times. I'm wondering, in the spirit of these visa—reciprocal

visa—arrangements that you've agreed to this week with businesspeople and students, isn't it time to extend that sort of right to foreign correspondents who seek to cover your country?

Thank you both very much.

President Obama. I'm trying to remember the question. [*Laughter*] I'm teasing.

First of all, with respect to press attitudes towards America or me in particular, I am always working on the assumption that the press giving me a hard time is true wherever I go, whether in the United States or China. That's part of being a public official. And I think that it is fair to say that there are differences between the United States and China on a range of issues. On the other end, I'm a big believer in actions and not words. And this summit, I think, is evidence of the value that China places in the relationship between the United States and China.

[*At this point, an interpreter interrupted President Obama in order to translate his remarks thus far.*]

President Obama. I'm sorry, go ahead.

[*Following the translation, President Obama continued as follows.*]

President Obama. On a whole host of issues at this summit, we've shown that U.S.-China cooperation can end up not only being good for the two countries, but for the world as a whole. And I do think that one of the benefits of a summit like this is the opportunity for one-on-one conversations between the leaders of the two countries to break down some of the misperceptions and mistrust that can build up over time.

So, for example, on the issue of Hong Kong, which did come up in our conversations, I was unequivocal in saying to President Xi that the United States had no involvement in fostering the protests that took place there; that these are issues ultimately for the people of Hong Kong and the people of China to decide. But I did describe for him that the United States, as a matter of foreign policy, but also a matter of our values, are going to consistently speak out on the right of people to express themselves and encouraged that the elections that take place in Hong Kong are transparent and fair and reflective of the opinions of people there.

And more broadly, our conversations gave me an opportunity to debunk the notion that you suggested, Mark, just now that our pivot to Asia is about containing China. I have repeatedly reiterated and displayed through the actions of our administration that we want China to succeed. And we actively encourage our friends and allies in the region to foster a strong and cooperative relationship with China.

So, as I mentioned briefly, we applaud the lowering of tensions between China and Japan. We think that's good for the region and good for both countries. And so what you left out of the list of actions that we've taken in this pivot to Asia is the multiple meetings I've had with President Xi and his predecessor and the remarkable scope of agreements that we have reached to deepen economic, scientific, educational, and security arrangements between the United States and China.

In other words, a strong, cooperative relationship with China is at the heart of our pivot to Asia. And if the United States is going to continue to lead the world in addressing global challenges, then we have to have the second largest economy and the most population—populous nation on Earth as our partner. And the carbon reduction agreement that we just announced is a perfect example of why a strong U.S.-China relationship is so critical.

And just in closing, I want to say that although there are going to continue to be tensions and disagreements between our countries, as is true with all countries, particularly large countries that have a lot of interests around the globe, I've consistently found President Xi to be willing to engage on those differences in a frank and candid manner, and we have consistently strived to find ways to narrow those differences.

I think the military-to-military cooperation announcements that we're making today are a perfect example of how rather than try to tamp down those differences, surfacing them and

then addressing them is going to be a centerpiece, a lynchpin for the kinds of cooperative agreements that I hope will continue for generations to come.

Moderator. Now, President Xi Jinping will take a question from a member of the Chinese press. China Daily, please.

Q. China Daily. The world is watching very closely today's summit meeting between you, President Xi, and President Obama. And the China-U.S. relationship has gone beyond the bilateral scope. It is increasingly consequential for the whole world and for this region. As China further develops, how does China see its own position and role in international affairs?

President Xi. Thank you for your question. There are very wide areas where China and the United States need to and can cooperate with each other. And as the international situation continues to experience complex, fluid, and profound changes, there will be even more areas where our two countries need to work together.

In recent years, China and the United States worked together to counter the impact of the global financial crisis. We have also worked together to try and resolve some regional hotspot issues, such as the Korean nuclear issue, the Iranian nuclear issue, the situation in Syria, and so on, through dialogue. We've also partnered with each other to address some serious challenges, including climate change, terrorism, and the Ebola epidemic.

The strategic significance of China-U.S. relations is on the rise. China is a participant in, builder of, and contributor to the current international system. China's economic development is in itself an important contribution to the global efforts to address the international financial crisis and to promote the recovery and the growth of the world economy.

China has sent more personnel to U.N. peacekeeping missions than any other permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. To date, we have sent over 20,000 of our military personnel to various U.N. peacekeeping operations. And the Chinese navy has conducted 45 escort missions in the piracy-ridden waters of the Gulf of Aden. And China is firm in opposing all forms of terrorism, and we have all along been supportive of international cooperation to fight terrorism.

The Chinese people empathize with the Western African countries that are experiencing the Ebola epidemic. We have so far provided four tranches of assistance that is worth 750 million RMB. And even as we speak, there are over 300 Chinese medical personnel working on the ground in Africa to help the affected areas.

As China continues to develop, we will shoulder more and more international responsibilities that are commensurate with our own strengths and position. We will remain firmly committed to working with other countries to share China's development opportunity and to address various challenges. And we will make our due share of contribution to maintaining and promoting peace, stability, and development in the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large.

Both President Obama and I believe that when China and the United States work together, we can become an anchor of world stability and a propeller of world peace. China stands ready to work with the United States to firm up our confidence, exercise our wisdom, and take action to strengthen our coordination and cooperation bilaterally, regionally and globally and to effectively manage our differences on sensitive issues so that we can make new gains in building the new model of major-country relations between China and the United States, which serves the fundamental interests of our two peoples and the people elsewhere in the world.

China and United States have different historical and cultural traditions, social systems, and phases of development. So it's natural that we don't see eye to eye on every issue. But there have always been more common interests between China and United States than the differences between us. Both sides should respect each other's core interests and the major concerns and manage our differences in a constructive fashion through dialogue and consultation so as to uphold the overall interests of stable growth of China-U.S. relations.

And I had a candid discussion with President Obama on human rights issues. Ever since the founding of the People's Republic of China, and especially over the last three decades and more of China's reform and opening era, China has made enormous progress in its human rights. That is a fact recognized by all the people in the world.

On the question of human rights, we should never consider our work to be mission accomplished. It's always work in progress, and there is always room for further improvement. China stands ready to have dialogue with the United States on human rights issues on the basis of equality and mutual respect so that we can constructively handle our differences, deepen our mutual understanding, and learn from each other.

In my talks with President Obama, I also pointed out that the Occupy Central is an illegal movement in Hong Kong. We are firmly supportive of the efforts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to handle the situation according to law so as to maintain social stability in Hong Kong and protect the life and the property of the Hong Kong residents. Hong Kong affairs are exclusively China's internal affairs, and the foreign countries should not interfere in those affairs in any form or fashion. And we will protect the lawful rights and interests of foreign citizens and business organizations in Hong Kong as well. And I think it goes without saying that law and order must be maintained according to law in any place, not just in Hong Kong, but also elsewhere in the world.

China and the United States are important countries in the world. It's perfectly normal for there to be different views expressed about us in the international media. And I don't think it's worth fussing over these different views. And I don't see any of the regional free trade arrangements as targeting against China. China is committed to open regionalism. And we believe the various regional cooperation initiatives and the mechanisms should have positive interaction with each other, and that is the case at the moment.

And China protects our citizens' freedom of expression and the normal rights and the interests of media organizations in accordance with law. On the other hand, media outlets need to obey China's laws and regulations. When a car breaks down on the road, perhaps we need to get off the car to see where the problem lies. And when a certain issue is raised as a problem, there must be a reason. In Chinese, we have a saying: The party which has created a problem should be the one to help resolve it. So perhaps we should look into the problem to see where the cause lies.

Thank you.

Moderator. This is the end of the press conference. Thank you, President Xi and President Obama. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:17 p.m. in the Great Hall of the People. In his remarks, the President referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson; and former President Hu Jintao of China. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. President Xi referred to the U.S.-China bilateral investment treaty (BIT); and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). President Xi, the moderator, and a reporter spoke in Chinese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by President Xi Jinping of China in Beijing
November 12, 2014

President Xi, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: Thank you for your extraordinary hospitality and the honor of this state visit, which is a reflection of the deep ties between our countries and our peoples.

I'm told that one of your great Chinese authors once wrote, "Originally, there was no path, but after many people travel a certain way, a path is forged."

Thirty-five years ago, our two nations established diplomatic relations. Since then, many people—Chinese and Americans—have traveled between us. Businesspeople, tourists, students and teachers, scientists and

researchers. And as a result, a new path has been forged.

Among those who traveled that path was President Xi, who on an exchange program as a younger man visited our State of Iowa and stayed with a local family. Mr. President, as a result of the ties you forged then, families in Iowa still welcome young men and women from China into their homes and communities.

That path has also been traveled by my wife Michelle and our two daughters, who visited China earlier this year. As I was on my visit 5 years ago, they were deeply moved by the history and majesty of this nation and its people. And Michelle even tried her hand at tai chi.

Now this path is being walked in new ways. We recently witnessed an inspiring sight: a Chinese plane landing in Liberia with supplies to fight Ebola, and it was unloaded by Chinese and Americans and Liberians, working together, shoulder to shoulder. And today we showed that we can bring that same spirit to bear as leaders in the fight against climate change.

In closing, I'd like to recall a Chinese saying that reflects this spirit of possibility: "Nothing is too difficult, as long as people have resolve." And so I propose a toast: To our people and the resolve we share, I wish the best of health to President Xi, his family, and the people of China, may we continue to walk the path of friendship and cooperation for the benefit of ourselves and for the world. *Ganbei.*

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:30 p.m. in the Great Hall of the People.

Joint Statement—United States-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change
November 12, 2014

Beijing, China

1. The United States of America and the People's Republic of China have a critical role to play in combating global climate change, one of the greatest threats facing humanity. The seriousness of the challenge calls upon the two sides to work constructively together for the common good.

2. To this end, President Barack Obama and President Xi Jinping reaffirmed the importance of strengthening bilateral cooperation on climate change and will work together, and with other countries, to adopt a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties at the United Nations Climate Conference in Paris in 2015. They are committed to reaching an ambitious 2015 agreement that reflects the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances.

3. Today, the Presidents of the United States and China announced their respective post-2020 actions on climate change, recognizing that these actions are part of the longer range effort to transition to low-carbon economies, mindful of the global temperature goal of 2°C. The United States intends to achieve an economy-wide target of reducing its emissions by 26%–28% below its 2005 level in 2025 and to make best efforts to reduce its emissions by 28%. China intends to achieve the peaking of CO2 emissions around 2030 and to make best efforts to peak early and intends to increase the share of non–fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to around 20% by 2030. Both sides intend to continue to work to increase ambition over time.

4. The United States and China hope that by announcing these targets now, they can inject momentum into the global climate negotiations and inspire other countries to join in coming forward with ambitious actions as soon as possible, preferably by the first quarter of 2015. The two Presidents resolved to work closely together over the next year to address major impediments to reaching a successful global climate agreement in Paris.

5. The global scientific community has made clear that human activity is already changing the world's climate system. Accelerating climate change has caused serious impacts. High-

er temperatures and extreme weather events are damaging food production, rising sea levels and more damaging storms are putting our coastal cities increasingly at risk and the impacts of climate change are already harming economies around the world, including those of the United States and China. These developments urgently require enhanced actions to tackle the challenge.

6. At the same time, economic evidence makes increasingly clear that smart action on climate change now can drive innovation, strengthen economic growth and bring broad benefits—from sustainable development to increased energy security, improved public health and a better quality of life. Tackling climate change will also strengthen national and international security.

7. Technological innovation is essential for reducing the cost of current mitigation technologies, leading to the invention and dissemination of new zero and low-carbon technologies and enhancing the capacity of countries to reduce their emissions. The United States and China are two of the world's largest investors in clean energy and already have a robust program of energy technology cooperation. The two sides have, among other things:

- established the U.S.-China Climate Change Working Group (CCWG), under which they have launched action initiatives on vehicles, smart grids, carbon capture, utilization and storage, energy efficiency, greenhouse gas data management, forests and industrial boilers;
- agreed to work together towards the global phase down of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), very potent greenhouse gases;
- created the U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center, which facilitates collaborative work in carbon capture and storage technologies, energy efficiency in buildings, and clean vehicles; and
- agreed on a joint peer review of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies under the G–20.

8. The two sides intend to continue strengthening their policy dialogue and practical cooperation, including cooperation on advanced coal technologies, nuclear energy, shale gas and renewable energy, which will help optimize the energy mix and reduce emissions, including from coal, in both countries. To further support achieving their ambitious climate goals, today the two sides announced additional measures to strengthen and expand their cooperation, using the existing vehicles, in particular the U.S.-China Climate Change Working Group, the U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center and the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue. These include:

- *Expanding Joint Clean Energy Research and Development:* A renewed commitment to the U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center, including continued funding for three existing tracks on building efficiency, clean vehicles and advanced coal technology and launching a new track on the energy-water nexus;
- *Advancing Major Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage Demonstrations:* Establishment of a major new carbon storage project based in China through an international public-private consortium led by the United States and China to intensively study and monitor carbon storage using industrial CO2 and also work together on a new Enhanced Water Recovery (EWR) pilot project to produce fresh water from CO2 injection into deep saline aquifers;
- *Enhancing Cooperation on HFCs:* Building on the historic Sunnylands agreement between President Obama and President Xi regarding HFCs, highly potent greenhouse gases, the two sides will enhance bilateral cooperation to begin phasing-down the use of high global warming potential HFCs and work together in a multilateral context as agreed by the two Presidents at their meeting in St. Petersburg on 6 September 2013;
- *Launching a Climate-Smart/Low-Carbon Cities Initiative:* In response to growing urbanization and increasingly significant greenhouse gas emissions

from cities and recognizing the potential for local leaders to undertake significant climate action, the United States and China will establish a new initiative on Climate-Smart/Low-Carbon Cities under the CCWG. As a first step, the United States and China will convene a Climate-Smart/Low-Carbon Cities Summit where leading cities from both countries will share best practices, set new goals and celebrate city-level leadership in reducing carbon emissions and building resilience;

- *Promoting Trade in Green Goods:* Encouraging bilateral trade in sustainable environmental goods and clean energy technologies, including through a U.S. trade mission led by Secretaries Moniz and Pritzker in April 2015 that will focus on smart low-carbon cities and smart low-carbon growth technologies; and
- *Demonstrating Clean Energy on the Ground:* Additional pilot programs, feasibility studies and other collaborative projects in the areas of building efficiency, boiler efficiency, solar energy and smart grids.

NOTE: The joint statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 11, but due to the 13-hour time difference between Washington, DC, and Beijing, China, the joint statement is dated November 12. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran
November 12, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12170 of November 14, 1979, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2014.

Because our relations with Iran have not yet returned to normal, and the process of implementing the agreements with Iran, dated January 19, 1981, is still under way, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12170 with respect to Iran.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
November 12, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to a United States-Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit Meeting in Nay Pyi Taw, Burma
November 13, 2014

Thank you very much, Mr. President. It is a great pleasure to be back in this beautiful country and to once again have the opportunity to consult closely with all of our ASEAN partners.

Today I'm looking forward to continuing to build on the strong partnership between ASEAN and the United States that already exists. President Thein Sein, I want to thank you for your hospitality and for bringing together this excellent summit. I think Myanmar has done a tremendous job chairing ASEAN this year and has shown solid leadership on issues of critical importance to the entire region.

As has already been noted in the EAS that we just attended, ASEAN is at the heart of Asia's rapid growth. Its people are ambitious and energetic and talented, and I'm looking forward to spending time tomorrow with young leaders from across Southeast Asia. And as a strong relationship between the United States and ASEAN is essential to realizing our shared vision for the future of the Asia-Pacific, I intend to continue to invest in these efforts not only during our summits, but more importantly, on a day-to-day basis.

During the past 6 years, we've made great strides in elevating and expanding this partnership, but I think we all agree we can still do more. And that's why the United States is committed to strengthening ASEAN, both as an institution and as a community of nations bound by our shared interests and values. And so, whether we are working on economic issues, social issues, security issues, disaster relief, enhancing educational opportunities for all the young people of the region, strengthening our public health infrastructure to ensure that we can handle an outbreak of disease—in each and every one of these cases, I believe that we are going to be stronger together than when we act individually. And we are very much invested in building the capacity not just of individual nations, but between nations so that together we can become stronger, more capable partners to each other and meet the regional and global challenges ahead. So thank you very much, Mr. President, and I look forward to hearing the remarks from our fellow leaders.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. at the Myanmar International Convention Center.

Remarks Following a Roundtable Discussion on Political Reform in Nay Pyi Taw

November 13, 2014

Well, I just had an excellent roundtable discussion with Members of Parliament as well as the Speaker of the lower and upper chamber—I may not be describing the term properly—as well as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who I will have an opportunity to visit later tomorrow.

It was an excellent discussion about this transition process that's taking place here in Myanmar around consolidating some of the gains that have already been made, but also pushing further to institute a genuine democracy here in this country that can serve the needs of all people. I've been very impressed by not only the quality of the Members of Parliament, but also their determination to move forward. And they represent different parties, but they're unified in wanting to see a better life for the people of this country.

And I want to thank the National Democratic Institute, NDI, as well as the work that we're doing through USAID to try to provide some of the technical skills and resources necessary for what is a new experience for many people, and that is running a democratic process and having a Parliament. And I'm very proud of the work that the United States is doing in partnering with this country in advancing some of these goals.

There were a lot of discussions that I think would be familiar with every country. How do we make sure that we're protecting minority rights? What's the balance between decentralization and centralization? How do majority parties and opposition parties work together for the good of the country, but how do you prevent the kind of acrimony or institutional entrenchment that over time erodes democracy?

There are certain unique circumstances involved in this transition. The large number of ethnic groups in the country, the existing armed conflicts that have gone on for many years between some of the ethnic groups and the Government, and the fact that the military is still a very powerful institution and managing how it transitions to greater civilian participation—these are all questions that we've seen in many other countries both in the region and around the world. And in the United States, we've had to wrestle with many of these questions as well, both in our founding and over the course of our democracy.

But what I'm encouraged by is the commitment of all the individuals here to try to make this work. And I think that if with strong leadership and commitment the attitude that I've heard today continues in the years to come, then I'm confident that what we will see is a completely new day for Myanmar. But the work is not yet done, and the goal of the United States here is to be a strong partner in the process. Like every good friend, we will praise what works. There will be times where we offer constructive criticism about the lack of progress in certain areas or where reform efforts have stalled.

But our consistent aim and goal will be to see that this transition is completed so that it delivers concrete benefits for the people, whether that's improved incomes for ordinary people; whether it means that farmers have greater access to productive lands; whether it means young people are getting a high-quality education; whether it means that religious minorities are adequately protected. The test in the end will be is it making people's lives better. These aren't abstract conversations, and I think all Members of Parliament here recognize that.

So I very much appreciate all of you sharing this moment with me, and it will inform my conversations with President Thein Sein this evening as well as my meetings with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi tomorrow when I travel down to Yangon. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:49 p.m. at the National Democratic Institute's Parliamentary Resource Center. In his remarks, he referred to Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Thura Shwe Mann, Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Khin Aung Myint, and Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Thein Sein of Burma in Nay Pyi Taw

November 13, 2014

Well, I want to thank once again President Thein Sein for welcoming us, not only for the excellent arrangements that were made for the EAS and the U.S.-ASEAN summit, but also the opportunity to exchange ideas face to face.

In part because of President Sein's leadership, the democratization process in Myanmar is real, and we can point to specific changes that are making a difference. Domestically, we've seen political prisoners that have been released. We have seen a effort to end the practice of children being recruited into the army. There is a genuine prospect for a cease-fire between some of the armed groups that have been fighting in Myanmar for decades.

But in our discussions, we recognized that this process is still incomplete. So, specifically, we had the opportunity to discuss elections that are scheduled for next year and the need for those elections to be fair, inclusive, transparent, and that the constitutional amendment process that has begun needs to reflect the ability of all voices in Myanmar's society to participate.

We also discussed the specific situation in Rakhine State and the need to work towards a situation in which the Muslim minority there is

protected and their rights are respected and they are able to fully enjoy the opportunities of this society.

And we discussed the opportunities for changes in the economy—legal reforms, regulatory reforms—that can allow the incredible natural resources and talents of Myanmar to fully access the opportunities of the world market.

And I thanked President Thein Sein for his efforts to end the arms trade with North Korea and to participate with us in building a strong nonproliferation regime here in this—Southeast Asia.

So we recognize that change is hard and that it doesn't always move in a straight line, but I am optimistic about the possibilities of Myanmar. I am optimistic about the continuing strengthening of bilateral ties between our two countries. And I committed to President Sein as well as his delegation and the people of Myanmar that all those who are sincere in pursuing reform will always have a strong ally in the United States of America. We look forward to working together.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 p.m. at the Presidential Palace.

The President's News Conference With Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma in Rangoon, Burma

November 14, 2014

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. I'm sorry if we've kept you waiting. Let me just begin with—by saying what a great pleasure it is for me to welcome President Obama again to my house and to be able to meet all of you.

I would just like to say that there have been those who have been saying that there is tension between the United States and the National League for Democracy or perhaps with me. I would like it—to make it quite clear that the friendship between the United States and those who have been struggling for democracy in Burma is a very strong one. We may view things differently from time to time, that—but it will in no way affect our friendship.

And I have absolute confidence that the United States will continue to support us with regard to the democratic transformation and that when Burma becomes a fully functioning democracy in accordance with the will of the people, we will be able to say that among those friends who enabled us to get there, the United States was among the first.

So please don't think—please don't worry that there will be any problems between the United States and those working for democracy in Burma. We all believe in the same values. We all believe in the same principles. We may sometimes think that there are different ways of getting to the goal that we wish to achieve, but these differences are part of the democratic tradition. Democracy allows people to have different views, and democracy makes it also—makes us also responsible for negotiating an answer for those views.

I would like all of you to feel welcome in this country, and I would all—like all of you to feel that you can join us in hoping for better days. But at the same time, I always warn against over-optimism because that could lead to complacency.

Our reform process is going through, let us say, a bumpy patch. But this bumpy patch is something that we can negotiate with commitment and with the help and understanding of our friends from all over the world. So let us not exaggerate the differences, the difficulties. But at the same time, let us not exaggerate the rosy picture either.

What we need is a healthy balance between optimism and pessimism. We need to view the situation for what it was. But at the same time, we all have to be confident that we will get there—we will get where we want to get to—because that's what our people want. In the end, it's a people of Burma who will decide

where this country is going to and in which way and how and when.

So we accept responsibility for the fate of our country, but at the same time, we welcome the support and the help of our friends. And we always appreciate them very greatly.

Thank you.

President Obama. Well, good afternoon, everybody. *Mingalaba.* It is wonderful to be back in Rangoon and to once more have the opportunity to spend time with Aung San Suu Kyi. As we know, it was in this house that she endured years of confinement, never giving up hope, never wavering in her determination to build a free and democratic Burma. Daw Suu, you helped set this country on a better path. I'm grateful for your friendship and for the hospitality that you've shown in opening your home up not only to me, but to all these people.

When I first made my historic visit to Burma, this country was just taking preliminary steps towards democracy. And in the past 2 years, important changes have been made. The economy has begun to grow. Political prisoners have been set free. There are more newspapers and media outlets. Children have been released from the military. And these are all important changes that have opened up greater opportunity for the people of Burma.

At the same time, as Aung San Suu Kyi just said, it's clear how much hard work remains to be done and that many difficult choices still lie ahead. The process for reform is by no means complete or irreversible. For many, progress has not come fast enough or spread far enough. People need to feel safe in their homes and not be subject to arbitrary harassment by authorities or individuals acting with impunity. People need to be empowered to pursue their dreams. And as Burma approaches important national elections next year, it will be critical to ensure that all of Burma's people can participate in shaping the future of their country.

As a Member of Parliament and the head of the Rule of Law Committee, Aung San Suu Kyi is working hard to make government more transparent, more accountable, to protect the rights of all the Burmese people, to promote reforms that would expand the political space for more people to contribute their voices. But implementing the major political and economic reforms that are necessary to keep Burma advancing toward democracy is going to take a great deal of political will and no small amount of determination. And we, as friends of the Burmese people, are clear eyed about the scale of the challenges that remain and recognize that we cannot remain complacent.

Today Daw Suu and I had a wide-ranging discussion about how the United States can help facilitate and bolster Burma's democratic transition. We talked about the need for stronger rule of law, for elections that are free, fair, and inclusive, and for continued constitutional changes that will move Burma more fully towards a civilian government.

We spoke about how we can work together to promote national reconciliation and defuse sectarian tensions among Burma's diverse ethnic groups. Specifically, I stressed the need to find durable and effective solutions for the terrible violence in Rakhine State: solutions that end discrimination, provide greater security and economic opportunities, protect all citizens, and promote greater tolerance and understanding. Strengthening human rights protections for all of Burma's people is an essential step to realizing the vision we share for the future of this beautiful country.

The last time I stood here, I made a pledge to the people of Burma: that if we continued to see progress toward reform, the ties between our countries would grow stronger and the United States would continue to do whatever it could to help ensure Burma's success. Over the last 2 years, I think we've made good on that pledge, and I want to reiterate the commitment to match continued reforms with greater support and friendships in the future.

We're committed to working directly with the people of Burma, not just the Government. So later today I'm looking forward to speaking with representatives of Burma's civil society groups and with young leaders from Burma and all across Southeast Asia who are working to create greater opportunities for themselves

and for future generations. I think these new voices are going to be critical to making sure that reforms are sustainable and meaningful to people across the country and across the region.

So, Daw Suu, thank you again for welcoming us here today. We continue to look to you for inspiration as well as resolve, and I know that you will continue to be a fierce advocate on behalf of the people of Burma, a future of democracy, and I know that you will be a strong partner with the United States.

So thank you.

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. Now, I think——

President Obama. Questions?

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. Who's going to invite——

President Obama. I'll go first.

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. All right.

President Obama. Christi Parsons [Los Angeles Times].

Q. [*Inaudible*]

President Obama. Not at all. I want you to keep cool. Don't move too fast.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

President Obama. Yes.

Freedom of the Press/China/New York Times Reporter James Risen

Q. [*Inaudible*]—the question I have—[*inaudible*]—you have been traveling in countries with long histories of repressing freedom of expression and censorship. And it was interesting yesterday that President Xi seemed to be saying that reporters who have problems have themselves to blame. And so I wonder to what extent you feel a need to contend with these ideas with leaders in this region as you travel. And what do you say to that? And if, by way of example, I might ask you, Attorney General—about the case of James Risen, the journalist who is facing prosecution for not revealing his source in a leak prosecution.

And I just wonder, Attorney General Holder has said that no reporter will go to jail on his watch. I wonder if that's—is he speaking specifically about this case? And is that your position as well?

And if I may, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, ask you: How concerned are you about the violence against ethnic minorities and the Rohingya people? And what do you believe is your responsibility to speak out about? Thank you.

President Obama. The issue of press freedom is a constant concern in my interactions with the Chinese Government. It's an issue that I've raised with the President here in Burma. I'm pretty blunt and pretty frank about the fact that societies that repress journalists ultimately oppress people as well and that if you want a society that is free and vibrant and successful, part of that formula is the free flow of information, of ideas, and that requires a free press. That is part of our tradition.

As I explained to President Xi in China, it's in our DNA. We believe in the primacy of individuals being able to pursue their dreams, endowed with certain inalienable rights. And we believe that when governments censor or control information, that ultimately, that undermines not only the society, but it leads to eventual encroachments on individual rights as well.

I can't comment, Christi, on any particular pending case, as you know—that's sort of an ironclad rule—or any particular prosecution. I can read back to you what Attorney General Holder has said, which is, no journalist is going to go to jail for doing their job. And I don't think you're suggesting that there's—that the two cases are comparable. But I recognize that in our own society we have to constantly balance the need for certain national security issues to remain secret with journalists pursuing leads wherever they can.

And the good news is, is that we've got courts and we've got a First Amendment. And we've got a whole bunch of tools to ensure that that balance is properly debated and adjudicated.

But I think that when I am traveling, it is important, as the President of the United States, to not just talk about our interests, but also to talk about our values. Sometimes, it has an impact; sometimes, it doesn't. Although I was impressed that Mark Landler got an answer to his question from President Xi. It might not have

been the one he was expecting, but he did end up taking the question. So you just keep on chipping away and seeing if we can make progress.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

President Obama. Hold on a second, Christi. Don't try to segue into a second question.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. I think I'd better take over, because I've got to have my time as well.

President Obama. There you go.

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. Well, the National League for Democracy always has been against violence of any kind, either on racial grounds or religious grounds or ideological grounds. We do not believe that violence really resolves anything at all.

Our struggle for democracy has been carried out with a strong grasp on the principle of nonviolence. And also, we believe in the rule of law. So, if you ask, how do we propose to resolve all of these problems of violence between communities, between different ethnic groups, we've got to start with rule of law. People have to feel secure before they can start talking to one another. We cannot achieve harmony without security. People who feel threatened are not going to sit down and sort out their problems.

So I would like to recommend, as the Chair of the Rule of Law and Tranquility Committee—don't forget that "Tranquility" is also included—that the Government should look to rule of law. It must—it is the duty of the Government to make all our people feel secure, and it is the duty of our people to learn to live in harmony with one another.

If we want democracy, we have to be prepared to live by the principles of democracy. We have to dare to live according to the principles of democracy. I think we'll get there, but it will take us some time. But we will remain fully committed to the principle of nonviolence.

President Obama. Good. Is there a Burmese journalist that you wand to call on?

Political Reform in Burma

Q. [*Inaudible*]—from the—[*inaudible*]—newspaper. Mr. President, I'd like to know about the Myanmar reforms. You have been talking with Presidents and Parliaments speakers, and also you're going to talk with the civil societies groups, and then youths. So my direct question to you is that, how—have you got any specific agreement with the Myanmar Government or President Thein Sein about Myanmar reforms such as constitutional change and peace negotiation, peace process, and also 2015 general election?

And also to Daw Aung San Sui Kyi, you have got a 1-hour discussion with the President, and at the current political situation, as you said, is a bumping situation—bumpy state. So, if you didn't make amendment, or you didn't change constitution, NLD and you, yourself, is going to be very difficult after 2015 election. So have you talked about those issues with the President? Or what President talked to you about U.S. support to you? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, the issue of making sure that reforms and the transition is fully realized was the main topic of our conversation and the main topic of my conversation with the President last night.

As I indicated before, there are signs of progress. We shouldn't deny that Burma today is not the same as Burma 5 years ago. But the process is still incomplete. And I was very specific with the President in terms of how we will measure whether or not the transition has been fully realized.

Number one, we expect elections to take place on time. We do not want to see delays, because it's time for the voice of the people of Burma to be heard in a fair, free, transparent election.

Number two, I indicated to the President that the Constitution amendment process needs to reflect inclusion rather than exclusion, that there are certain provisions in the Burmese Constitution that objectively don't make much sense. Ultimately, what changes are made are up to the people of Burma. But, for example, I don't understand a provision

that would bar somebody from running for President because of who their children are. That doesn't make much sense to me.

Number three, we are very much in favor of the peace process, and I encouraged the President to move forward in the negotiations. He expressed some optimism about the ability to bring a deal to a conclusion. But as Daw Suu has indicated, you have to be skeptical until it's actually done.

Number four, I indicated that we are paying attention to how religious minorities are treated in this country. Now, I recognize the complexities of the situation in Rakhine State. On the other hand, consistent with what Daw Suu just said, I am a firm believer that any legitimate government has to be based on rule of law and a recognition that all people are equal under the law. And discrimination against the Rohingya or any other religious minority, I think, does not express the kind of country that Burma over the long term wants to be. And I know of no successful democracy in which sectarian or religious divisions are allowed to fester or the people of different faiths are treated as second-class citizens. Ultimately, that is destabilizing to a democracy.

And finally, I expressed to the President the need to continue to make additional progress on basic issues of freedom and personal security, that journalists can't be jailed simply because they were critical of the Government, that arbitrary arrests or individuals being in some fashion abused by Government with impunity rather than being respected and treated in accordance with law, that that's a test of whether or not a society is moving towards a genuine democratic process.

And the President yesterday acknowledged that some progress has been made and there was more to do. And our position will be to continue to measure what's happening on the ground, to consult with a wide range of groups here in Burma. We will strengthen our relationship where we see progress. Where we don't see progress, then we will continue to express our concerns, and we will not be able to fully realize the kind of bilateral relationship that we want to have with Burma—the Burmese Government—until we've seen some of these reforms completed.

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. You asked whether it's going to be difficult for the NLD to win the elections if the amendments to the Constitution are not pushed through. I think it's too early to ask this question. We've just spent one afternoon debating the question of constitutional amendment. I think perhaps some of you may have heard that proportional representation is not going to be instituted.

So, when we started defending first-past-the-post system against proportional representation, there were many who said to us, you are a very small minority in the legislature, how can you hope to win this case? It's not a matter of wanting to win a case, it's a matter of standing up for what we believe in, for what we believe is necessary for the future of our country.

Now we are asking for a constitutional amendments not because we're trying to win a case, but because we think that certain amendments are necessary if this country is to be a truly functioning democracy in line with the will of the people. Because of that, we will persist in our efforts to have the Constitution amended in the right way and within the framework of the law. I've always put great emphasis on this because I want peace and tranquility in our country. I want our people to learn to live under the rule of law and to support and uphold the importance of the rule of law.

So, with regard to the Constitution, we know that the people support our wish to amend it in certain ways, and we are prepared to negotiate with those who do not wish to amend the Constitution. I think that is what's—that's what democracy is all about. We need a culture of negotiated compromise as a foundation for our democratic union.

So we would like to—it's not just a matter of debating the case in Parliament and winning Brownie points or Boy Scout points or whatever they're called. [*Laughter*] But it's just a case of standing up for what we think our country needs. And we would like to talk to those who disagree with us. That, again, is what democracy is about. You talk to those who disagree with

you; you don't beat them down. You exchange views. And you come to a compromise, a settlement that would be best for the country.

I've always said that dialogues and debates are not aimed at achieving victory for one particular party or the other, but victory for our people as a whole. Whatever we decide on should be seen as a victory for our Nation, for the kind of democratic union that we have been trying to build up for decades.

So please don't worry about whether or not we will win the elections in 2015. Of course, any party wants to win the elections. I'm sure the President will tell you that. [*Laughter*] But winning is not everything; it's how you win. I'd rather lose than win in the wrong way. And that is the way I want our party and our people to approach the problems that we have to tackle: that we want to win in the right way. We want to bring the changes of the Constitution about in the right way.

We want to build up a strong foundation for national reconciliation, which means reconciliation not just between the different ethnic groups and between different religious groups, but between different ideas; for example, between the idea of military supremacy and the idea of civilian authority over the military, which is the foundation of democracy.

So we want to exchange views and to come to an understanding with all those who at this moment do not yet agree with us. And we are confident that we can come to such a settlement, come to such an agreement because, after all, I do believe that what all of us want is what is best for the country as a whole, not just for particular individuals or groups or organizations.

So, while I tell you that you need not worry about what affect amendment or nonamendment to the Constitution might have on the elections, I might as well ask you to vote for us when we do get there. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. Pete Maer [CBS Radio News].

Immigration Reform/Keystone XL Pipeline Project/U.S.-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change/Bipartisanship/Political Reform in Burma

Q. Mr. President, it seems the stage is set for even more confrontation between you and Republicans when you get home, if that's possible. We're told that you're soon going to sign the immigration reform Executive order. To what extent are you concerned about a Republican backlash from an action of that magnitude?

And on two other issues, I'm wondering what your take is on the plan to pass a bill to build the Keystone pipeline that's in the works now, before the State Department review process is over. And Senator McConnell is angry over the climate deal that you had made with China. How does all of this square with your postelection assessment that people want to, as you put it, get stuff done?

And if I may also pose a question to you, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Thank you for hosting all of us here from the White House media corps. As the President mentioned the constitutional barring of you running in your country's election, what do you think the impact will be from the President's statement that was made here today on his strong opposition to that constitutional wording? And what impact do you think it will have on the Government here? And is there anything more that you'd like to see him do? Thank you.

President Obama. Pete, the day after the election, I said that there are going to be areas of agreement between me and Republicans and there are going to be areas of disagreement. There are going to be actions I take they don't like, and there are going to be bills they pass that I don't like.

And I think, moving forward, that's exactly what's going to happen. You've mentioned areas where we disagree. I believe that America is a nation of immigrants. Everybody agrees that the system is broken. There has been ample opportunity for Congress to pass a bipartisan immigration bill that would strengthen our borders, improve the legal immigration system, lift millions of people out of the shadows so

they are paying taxes and getting right by the law. It passed out of the Senate. I gave the House over a year to go ahead and at least give a vote to the Senate bill; they failed to do so. And I indicated to Speaker Boehner several months ago that if in fact Congress failed to act, I would use all the lawful authority that I possess to try to make the system work better. And that's going to happen. That's going to happen before the end of the year.

But what I've also said to them—and I said this during the lunch with the Speaker and Leader McConnell—is that I am always interested in negotiating a legislative solution to the immigration problem and that the minute they pass a bill that I can sign that fixes our immigration system, then any executive actions I take are replaced.

So they have the ability to fix the system. What they don't have the ability to do is to expect me to stand by with a broken system in perpetuity. And I would advise that if in fact they want to take a different approach, rather than devote a lot of time trying to constrain my lawful actions as the chief executive of the U.S. Government in charge of enforcing our immigration laws, that they spend some time passing a bill and engaging in the—with all the stakeholders—the immigrant rights groups, the law enforcement groups, the evangelicals, the business community—all of whom have said this is something that needs to be done, and it's way overdue. And we've been talking about it for 10 years now, and it's been consistently stalled.

So, with respect to Keystone, I've been clear in the past, Pete—my position hasn't changed—that this is a process that is supposed to be followed. Right now you've got a case pending in Nebraska, where the pipeline would run through, in which a State court judge has questioned the plan. And until we know what the route is, it's very hard to finish that evaluation. And I don't think we should short-circuit that process.

I have also noted that, as a policy matter, my government believes that we should judge this pipeline based on whether or not it accelerates climate change or whether it helps the American people with their energy costs and their gas prices. And I have to constantly push back against this idea that somehow the Keystone pipeline is either this massive jobs bill for the United States or is somehow lowering gas prices.

Understand what this project is. It is providing the ability of Canada to pump their oil, send it through our land, down to the Gulf, where it will be sold everywhere else. It doesn't have an impact on U.S. gas prices. You know what does have an impact on U.S. gas prices is the incredible boom in U.S. oil production and natural gas production that's taken place under my administration.

And if my Republican friends really want to focus on what's good for the American people in terms of job creation and lower energy costs, we should be engaging in a conversation about, what are we doing to produce even more homegrown energy? I'm happy to have that conversation.

With respect to the climate change deal, I have been very clear that I have responsibilities as President not just to current generations, but to future generations. The science is indisputable: The planet is getting warmer, and it is getting warmer in part because of manmade activity.

And the release of carbon gases—carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases—into the atmosphere can have a potentially devastating effect that will cost our country, could devastate communities, could increase the impact of natural disasters, and will have an impact worldwide that is destabilizing and could affect our national security. That's not my opinion, by the way, that is the opinion of our Joint Chiefs of Staff: that climate change is a direct national security threat.

Now, the argument that I've received in the past has been either denial of the science, or alternatively, there's no point in us doing something about it despite us being one of the two largest emitters in the world, because if we do something and China doesn't do anything, we'll just put ourselves at a competitive disadvantage, we'll lose jobs to China, and the problem won't be solved anyway.

I'm not going to deny the science, but I took seriously the notion that we want all countries to participate in solving a global problem. And so I engaged with China over a lengthy set of negotiations. And by all independent accounts, for the first time, we got China to make a very serious commitment to constrain its greenhouse gases. Why would anybody be against that? That sounds like the right thing to do to me. So that's a response to those specific ideas.

But let me reiterate what I said at the top. The fact that I disagree or Republicans disagree with me on a certain set of issues doesn't exclude us working together on a whole range of issues where we do agree. They're interested in tax reform; so am I. Let's get to work. They're interested in promoting trade that will create jobs and opportunity for U.S. workers and U.S. businesses—all over it. It's part of what this Asia trip has been all about. They're interested in rebuilding our roads, our bridges, our ports, our airports, putting people back to work, making sure we're competitive; I'm game. So the one thing that I think is going to be important for us to have a successful partnership over the next couple of years is not making disagreements on a single issue suddenly a deal-breaker on every issue. Democracy can never work that way, because there are always going to be some differences. And when there are differences, you can't elevate those differences above the commonalities.

I'm sorry. That was a long answer, but it was a lot of questions.

The—do you want to——

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. I'm sorry the President can't get away from all those.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

President Obama. I know. But before Daw Suu responds to the point about the constitutional amendment, I just want to emphasize, ultimately, it's up to the people of Burma to make a decision about all these provisions.

I expressed an objective view that some of the current provisions don't seem to have much grounding in common sense or precedent when you look at other constitutions around the world and seem more focused on advantaging or disadvantaging certain players. And one of the basic concepts of a constitution is that it creates a level playing field for all people, and then, so I use that as an example not because I think my voice is the one that's most relevant in terms of the constitutional amendment process. Ultimately, it's up to the people of Burma.

Q. But you did say—[*inaudible*].

President Obama. I did. It doesn't make much sense to me.

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. Well, he believes in democracy. He should stand up for that principle.

President Obama. Absolutely.

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. Well, I've always said that it's somewhat flattering to have a constitution written with me in mind. [*Laughter*] But it shouldn't be done that way. That's not how a democratic constitution should be written. And we object to that clause not because it debars me from the Presidency as such, but because it is against the principles of democracy and also unconstitutional. The Constitution says that all citizens should be treated as equals, and this is discrimination on the grounds of my children, my children's spouses, et cetera, et cetera.

Now, this is not acceptable. And our people are firmly behind us in our desire to change this clause. And if President Obama said anything about the necessity to change a clause like that, they will love him very much for it. [*Laughter*] So he will be very popular among our people.

And as he said, in the end, it is up to our people to shape the destiny of our country, including the way the Constitution is going to be rewritten. And I think the majority of our people understand that this Constitution cannot stand as it is if we want to make the full transition to democracy; 59(f), as you know, debars anybody who is children of—the spouses of the children belong to—are citizens of another country.

And according to the law—and I think the President will know the law better than I do, because I'm not a lawyer—according to the law, anybody who is over the age of 18, or whatever legal adult age may be in his or her

country, is responsible for himself or herself. Nobody else is responsible for that person.

So, from that point of view also, you cannot penalize anybody for what his or her adult children do. So, from that point of view, it's illegal, it's against all norms of justice. And from the point of view of democracy, it is not right to discriminate against one particular citizen. You wouldn't like to be discriminated against, would you?

So I think our people support the idea of amending this clause because—not particularly because they want me to be President, perhaps because they do. But I don't think it is so much because of that, but because they realize that this is unfair, unjust, and undemocratic.

President Obama. Okay, a question——

Press Freedom in Burma

Q. I thank you. I am—[*inaudible*]—from 11 Media from Myanmar. And I would like to ask the question to Mr. President. The question is, have you discussed about the journalist situation in Myanmar with the President Thein Sein last night? Because more journalists and politicians have been arrested, persecuted, and sent to the jail under the President Thein Sein administration. And when you discussed about about this, how he did he respond to this discussion? Thank you.

President Obama. I didn't bring up specific cases with him. I brought up a basic principle that I stated earlier, which is that a free press is a foundation for any democracy.

We rely on journalists to explain and describe the actions of our Government. If the Government controls the journalists, then it's very difficult for citizens to hold that Government accountable. It's a fairly straightforward proposition. And I recognize that there is a transition process that's taking place, that there is a more robust debate today than there was the last time I visited. But to go back to what we said earlier, we can't be complacent. And we, as a Government, are going to be troubled when we hear reports of journalists being imprisoned, being killed, being intimidated, or being censored.

And when we engage with this Government—or any Government—and we have evidence that that's taking place, then we're going to raise it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:35 p.m. at the residence of Aung San Suu Kyi. In his remarks, the President referred to Mark Landler, White House correspondent, New York Times; and Stephanie F. Stacy, district judge, Lancaster County, NE.

Remarks Following a Roundtable Discussion on Civil Society in Rangoon
November 14, 2014

Well, I've just had an opportunity to speak with an excellent cross-section of civil society organizations here in Myanmar: women's organizations, organizations focused on rule of law, you have the press association, the press council represented here, organizations championing the rights of the disabled, labor organizations, student organizations, groups that are concerned with the plight of ethnic minorities here.

And one thing that's become clear from this conversation is that there is a vibrant civil society here, one that is committed to democracy and transparency and accountability. And it is U.S. policy to make sure that these civil society groups are supported and that they have the space in which to let their ideas and their concerns be expressed.

And as many of you know, I got my start in public life not as a politician, but actually as a community organizer. I very much believe that when ordinary people have the means to make themselves heard and to organize with each other to present their concerns that society is better. And nowhere is that more true than in a country like Myanmar that is transitioning from a military dictatorship to a democracy.

So I very much appreciate all the ideas that have been shared here. I think that what is most important from all the groups is that the laws are applied in a fair way; that we don't see the Government acting with impunity simply because a group may represent ideas that the Government hasn't approved of or that in some ways challenges the status quo, but that everybody's voice is allowed to be heard.

Not everybody at this table, by the way, agrees on every issue. We heard different perspectives on some very controversial issues, including what's happening in Rakhine State. But the fact that you can have open dialogue like this means that those problems can be solved. And if those ideas are suppressed, then nothing will change.

So I'm very pleased to have spent time with you, and I want to assure you that the United States will continue to be a partner with the people of Myanmar. And we'll continue to engage the Government to provide more space and more opportunity for freedom of the press, freedom of association, rule of law, transparency, and accountability. All right?

Thank you so much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:14 p.m. at the U.S. Embassy.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Town Hall at the University of Yangon in Rangoon
November 14, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody!

Audience members. Hi!

The President. Myanmar luu ngae myar mingalarbar!

Audience members. Mingarlabar!

The President. It's wonderful to be back in Myanmar. Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. Oh, we've got some signs—"Reform is fake!" "Change"—okay, well, you guys will have a chance to ask questions later. The—yes, you can put them away. And that's why we're here, for a town hall. [*Laughter*] See, that's the thing, when you have a town hall, you don't have a protest because you can just ask the questions directly. [*Laughter*]

Two years ago, I was the first American President to visit this country, and I was deeply moved by the generous hospitality that greeted us here and the sight of children waving the flags of both of our nations. And I was inspired by the incredible diversity and culture and the various religious sites from different faiths and communities. And I was inspired again today, when I had the opportunity to visit the Secretariat, the birthplace of modern Burma; the blueprint for democracy; the home to Burmese, Chinese, Indians, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, and Christians who lived together peacefully, an incredible example of multicultural and multifaith diversity and tolerance. And it's a profound symbol of this country's rich diversity and this region's potential.

Whenever I travel the world, from Europe to Africa, South America to Southeast Asia, one of the things I most enjoy doing is meeting young men and women like you. It's more fun than being in a conference room. And it's also more important, because you are the young leaders who will determine the future of this country and this region. So I'm going to keep my remarks short at the top, because I want to take as many questions and comments from you.

As President of the United States, I've made it a priority to deepen America's ties with Southeast Asia, in particular, with the young people of Southeast Asia. And I do this for reasons that go beyond the fact that I spent some of my childhood in Southeast Asia, in Indonesia. And I—that gives me a special attachment, a special feeling for Southeast Asia and this region. But I do it mainly because the 10 nations of ASEAN are home to about 1 in 10 of the world's citizens. About two-thirds of Southeast Asia's population is under 35 years old. So this region—a region of growing economies and

emerging democracies and a vibrant diversity that includes oceans and islands and jungles and cities and peoples of different races and religions and beliefs—this region will shape the 21st century.

And that's why I launched the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative: to deepen America's engagement with the next generation of leaders in government and civil society, in education and in entrepreneurship. And more than 10,000 young leaders like you have joined this Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative network, working to solve the challenges and seize the opportunities of this region in a spirit of mutual cooperation and respect. So earlier this year, I held a town hall just like this one, in Malaysia. And today I'd like to take our next steps together with you.

When I took office nearly 6 years ago, I said the United States would extend our hand to any nation willing to unclench its fist. And here, after decades of authoritarian rule, we've begun to see significant progress in just a few years. There is more of a sense of hope in Myanmar—that was once so closed to the world—about the role that it can now play in the region and in the world.

But we know that a journey to progress is not completed overnight. There are setbacks and false starts, and sometimes even reversals. And that was true in America during our 238-year history. It's happened here in the past 2 or 3 years. We've seen some progress, and we should acknowledge that progress.

We also know, though, that despite the fact that political prisoners have been released and people are more engaged in political dialogue, there's a Parliament, and civil society is emerging—despite all that, some reforms have not come quickly enough. There are still attacks against journalists and against ethnic minorities. America is still deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State and the treatment of minorities who endure discrimination and abuse.

On this visit, I've met separately with President Thein Sein and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as Members of Parliament and civil society leaders. And we discussed key reforms that have to be made to ensure that human rights and freedom are respected and the people of this country can reach for their rightful place in the region and the world. And I was also proud to announce that the Peace Corps will come here, to Myanmar, to deepen the ties between our people. It gives an extraordinary opportunity for young Americans to interact with young people here in Myanmar. And that people-to-people exchange is often as important or more important as government-to-government exchanges.

So progress is not inevitable. History does not always march forward. History can travel sideways and sometimes backwards. Building trust after years of conflict takes time. Being able to look past the scars of violence takes courage. Securing the gains of freedom and democracy requires good faith and strength of will and tolerance and respect for diversity, and it requires vigilance from all citizens. The American people know well that rights and freedoms are not given; they have to be won through struggle and through discipline and persistence and faith. And it's often young people who have led these struggles, who have compelled us to slowly but surely perfect our own Union in America over time.

Now, I understand there's a Burmese saying. I've got to make sure that I say this right. *Ngote mi thè daing*—help me out. Is that right?—*tet naing hpyar yauk.* [*Applause*] All right? All right.

So, for those Americans who don't speak Burmese as well as I do—[*laughter*]—that means: "Dive until you reach the sand, climb until you reach the top. Keep persevering."

And America is committed to helping the young people of this nation and this region climb until you reach the top. We believe in this nation. That's why I've come and visited twice in the last few years, because we see a future where democratic institutions can be accountable and responsive, where political activists are free, where elections are fair, where journalists can pursue the truth, where ethnic minorities can live without fear.

So we're betting on this country, but we're also betting on this region, because we see

young people of different nations and religions and ethnicities who are eager to come together and address all the challenges that are out there: environmental protection; human rights; improving education; combating poverty; advocating for a greater role for women in business, and in government, and in society; increasing resilience in the face of natural disasters; spurring economic progress so more young people can follow in your footsteps and get a good education and have opportunity.

We see young leaders who embrace the diversity of this region not as a weakness, but as a strength, and who realize that even though we are all individually different and come from different traditions and different communities, we're stronger when we work together.

So the future of this region, your region, is not going to be determined by dictators or by armies, it's going to be determined by entrepreneurs and inventors and dreamers and people who are doing things in the community. And you're going to be the leaders who make that happen. Your generation has greater potential to shape society than any generation that's come before, because you have the power to get knowledge from everywhere and you have more sophistication and experiences than your parents or your grandparents. And you have now the chance to share knowledge and experiences with other young people all across this region and around the world. And that wasn't true 20 years ago or 50 years ago.

Lamin Oo uses his power to tell the story of his fellow Burmese. He studied at Gettysburg College in the United States. The transformation that he watched unfold through Facebook inspired him to return home and make an award-winning documentary about the plight of Burmese farmers. And he says, "My country has been closed so long, there are a lot of stories to be told." So you young people have the chance to say—to tell those stories. You have the power to improve institutions that are very important for democratic governance, like civil society and an impartial judiciary and a free press and private enterprise. And there's so much to build here.

In countries like this, it's critical that you get involved in that way. I'll give you an example. Ryan Louis Madrid dreamt of being a journalist. But as he stood surrounded by the wreckage of a typhoon in his beloved Philippines, he made himself into an instrument for his fellow citizens rebuilding. Today, the organization he cofounded puts solar rooftops in developing and recovering communities. And he wants to use his skills to encourage other enterprising young people in developing countries to say in their countries and help their own people, to think globally and act locally. You have the power to remind us all that human dignity is not just a universal aspiration, but a human right.

So Wai Wai Nu spent 7 years of her youth behind bars as a political prisoner. And she called it her "university about life." Today, she uses that hard-earned degree to advocate for tolerance and acceptance, saying, "We too sacrificed many things for the same cause, and that is democracy."

You have the chance to overcome hatred and make sure that freedom rather than repression, hope rather than fear is governing your country. You have the power to set your own countries on a new and different path.

And in all of this, America wants to be your partner. We want to help any way that we can to help you shape your future. We want you to have the tools and the connections and the resources that you need to change the world.

So one way that we can do this, I'm announcing a significant expansion of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Fellowship, an exchange program that will bring 500 Southeast Asian leaders to the United States every year. And these fellows will have the chance to strengthen their professional and leadership skills, network with one another, share experiences and ideas, and then come back home better prepared to lead your region and change the world.

So some of these fellows will benefit from 5-week instruction at some of the best universities in America on issues like entrepreneurship and environmental stewardship and civil society and human rights. Others will have the

chance to work in professional fellowships at State and local governments and NGOs across the United States. And by the way, through this program that I hope some of you will be able to take advantage of, when you spend time in the United States, our people learn from you. It's not just you learning from us.

And when these fellows then return home with these new ideas and new experiences, our Embassies and USAID missions will reach out and offer the support and resources to help make your dreams a reality. So today I'm proud to announce that America will convene a Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Summit in this region every year, giving fellows the chance to share their successes with each other and strengthen their network to accomplish even more.

So I hope some of you will take advantage of this. I expect many of you will take up the mantle of reform from student activists like Aung San Suu Kyi and Min Ko Naing, take your rightful place as leaders in a stable and prosperous and progressive Southeast Asia. And as you do, I promise, you will have no better friend and partner than the United States of America.

All right, so thank you very much. *Kyeizu tin ba de.* I now want to take your questions.

All right. So—and I hope you don't mind, because it's a little warm in Myanmar, I'm going to take off my jacket. So the—[*laughter*]. All right.

Okay, so there should be a—I've got a microphone, and there should be mikes in the audience. And I'll take as many questions as I can before I have to go to Australia. [*Laughter*]

All right, who wants to go first? This young man right here.

Religious and Ethnic Tolerance

Q. I'm—[*inaudible*]. I'm from—I'm a third-year student, majoring in English at Sittwe University, Rakhine State, or as you would say, Rakhine State.

The President. I'm still working on my pronunciation. [*Laughter*]

Q. I've experienced some sectarian and racial violence firsthand in my region. So the question I would like to ask you to answer is: How can I be part of educating my generation to promote tolerance and respect cultural differences and, most of all, eradicate extremism among different ethnic groups?

The President. That's a great question. Thank you so much. I had a chance to meet with some civil society groups, and I had a press conference earlier today. Yesterday I had a chance to meet with Parliamentarians, including the Speaker—the two Speakers, as well as Aung San Suu Kyi, and then spoke with the President. And to all of them, I said this: There is no example of a country that is successful if its people are divided based on religion or ethnicity. If you look at the Middle East right now and the chaos that's taking place in a place like Syria, so much of that is based on religious differences. Even though they're all Muslim, Shia and Sunni are fighting each other. If you look in Northern Ireland, then Catholics and Protestants fought for decades and only now have arrived at peace.

So, in this globalized world, where people of different faiths and cultures and races are going to meet each other inevitably—because nobody just lives in a village anymore; people are constantly getting information from different places and new ideas and meeting people who are different from them—it is critical for any country to abide by the basic principle that all people are equal, all people are deserving of respect, all people are equal under the law, all people can participate in the life of their country, all people should be able to express their views without fear of being repressed. And those attitudes start with each of us individually. It's important that government play a role in making sure that it applies laws fairly, not arbitrarily, not on the basis of preferring one group over another. But what's also true is that each of us have to cultivate an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect. And for young people, we have to try to encourage each other to be tolerant and respectful.

So, in the United States, obviously, one of the biggest problems historically has been the issue of racial discrimination. And part of our efforts to overcome racial discrimination

involve passing laws like the Civil Rights Law and the Voting Rights Law, and that required marches and protests and Dr. King. But part of the effort was also people changing their hearts and minds and realizing that just because somebody doesn't look like me doesn't mean that they're not worthy of respect.

And when you're growing up and you saw a friend of yours call somebody by a derogatory name, a rude name because they were different, it's your job to say to that person, actually, that's not the right way to think. If you are Christian and you have a friend who says, "I hate Muslims," then it's up to you to say to that friend: "You know what, I don't believe in that. I think that's the wrong attitude. I think we have to be respectful of the Muslim population." If you're Buddhist, and you say—you hear somebody in your group say, "I want to treat a Hindu differently," well, it's your job to speak out. So the most important thing, I think, is for you to, in whatever circle of influence you have, speak out on behalf of tolerance and diversity and respect.

If you are quiet, then the people who are intolerant, they'll own the stage, and they'll set the terms of the debate. And one of the things that leadership requires is saying things even when it's uncomfortable, even when it's unpopular, especially when it's unpopular. So I hope that as you get more influence, you'll continue to speak out on behalf of these values.

All right, who's next?

Okay, I'm going to go—now, the one thing I'm going to do is I'm going to go boy, girl, boy, girl to make sure that it's fair, because one thing I didn't say in my initial speech is, societies that are most successful also treat their women and girls with respect. Otherwise, they won't be successful.

So—[*applause*]. All right, the young lady in the yellow, right there, who had her hand up. Okay, but we—hold on so we can get a microphone.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations/Political Reform in Burma/Criticism of U.S. Foreign Policy/International Economic Interdependence

Q. Thanks giving a chance to read to us a question. I am—[*inaudible*]. I am Kachin and Burmese. I would like to ask about the ASEAN affair. So my question is, there are different political systems and different level of democratic freedoms in ASEAN. Do you think those differences will cause challenges to ASEAN integration? And do you believe this is the right time to push for ASEAN integration? Thank you.

The President. Okay, well, of the 10 countries in ASEAN, I just had a chance to meet with all their leaders at the U.S.-ASEAN summit. And the good news is that ASEAN has become more ambitious over the last several years in trying to promote integration, to work together on issues like disaster relief or public health or maritime security or improved education. And I think it's inevitable that integration is going to happen more and more.

And my hope is that by encouraging integration, that the countries who are doing better on issues like democracy and human rights have a positive influence in bringing up those countries that don't have such a good record. And we've actually, I think, seen that happen. Listen, when I first came into office, Myanmar was still very much a dictatorship. And there was some controversy about me participating in an ASEAN summit because there was still no freedom in Myanmar. And I think that President Thein Sein, because he was with leaders like SBY of Indonesia—[*applause*]. [*Laughter*] See there, all right, the Indonesians started cheering—who had traveled the path of democracy, I think President Thein Sein began to see how more open societies were becoming more successful and, I think, had a positive influence on—I think his participation in ASEAN had a positive influence in providing an opening to begin the process of transition here in Myanmar.

But it's important, I think, that even as we engage with countries that are less open or less democratic, that we also continue to apply constructive criticism where they fall backwards, where they fall short. And sometimes, that's hard to do. I think a lot of the leaders of ASEAN don't like to criticize each other because they think that it's not respectful. And no country is

perfect, so they worry that if we criticize one country, then somebody will criticize us.

But I think the goal should be for all of us to try to improve what we do on behalf of our people every single day. I mean, I'm very proud of the United States. I believe that the United States is a force for good around the world. But I wouldn't be a good President if I don't listen to criticism of our policies and stay open to what other countries say about us. Now, sometimes, I think those criticisms are unfair. Sometimes, I think people like to complain about the United States because we're doing too much. Sometimes, they complain because they're doing too little. Every problem around the world, why isn't the United States doing something about it? Sometimes, there are countries that don't take responsibility for themselves, and they want us to fix it. And then when we do try to fix it, they say, why are you meddling in our affairs? [*Laughter*] Yes, it's kind of frustrating sometimes.

But the fact that we are getting these criticisms means that we're constantly thinking, okay, is this how we should apply this policy? Is—are we doing the right thing when we provide aid to a country, but the country is still ruled by a small elite and maybe it's not getting down to the people? Are we doing the right thing when we engage in training a military to become more professional, but maybe the military is still engaging in repressive activity? If don't receive—if we're not open to those criticisms, then we won't get better, we won't improve.

And I think all of us should be interested in trying to get better, because none of us are perfect and no country is perfect. So I do think ASEAN has an opportunity to play a very important role. But integration is inevitable just because the nature of economies today. There's too much travel, there's too much Internet, there's too much—too many smartphones. When I was driving through here, everybody had a smartphone. I saw a bunch of people, they didn't have any shirt, but they had a smartphone. [*Laughter*] So what that means is—and most manufacturing today of various products, the parts are made in, like, five different countries, and then they become integrated in some fashion. And then, they're sold all around the world. So integration is going to happen no matter what. The question is, do we integrate at a high level that improves freedom and improves opportunity, or are we integrating at a low level, where there's less freedom and less opportunity? And I believe in integrating at a high level, and I hope most members of ASEAN do also.

All right, it's a guy's turn now. Don't want to discriminate against the men. [*Laughter*] This gentleman right here. Yes, with the mustache and the beard. [*Laughter*] There you go. There's a microphone coming right here. You can just stay where you are. Careful. Hold on to her, so she doesn't fall.

Political Reform in Burma/Education/Agricultural Development

Q. Hello, Mr. President Obama. My name is—[*inaudible*]—and I am studying law. My question is, now we are in the democratic transition, so our country is facing so many challenges in every sectors. So, if you were the President of Myanmar—[*laughter*]—which sector you will focus on first? And how you will make our country develop? Thank you.

The President. Well, the—let me just say, you're always popular in somebody else's country. [*Laughter*] When you're in your own country, everybody is complaining. The—well, I think you're right, Myanmar has so many challenges. I think the most important challenge right now is completing the transition to democracy. And so my first focus is, I think, the focus that many people have already talked about.

Number one, there needs to be an election next year. It shouldn't be delayed. Number two, there should be constitutional amendments that ensure a transition over time to a fully civilian government. Number three, there needs to be laws put in place to protect freedom of the press, freedom of expression, freedom to politically organize.

And I think that if that process is fixed and institutionalized and made permanent, then you now have the tools to deal with all the

other challenges, and I think that inevitably what would happen if you had a genuine democracy in Myanmar is the focus next would then be on providing economic opportunity, because Myanmar is still a very poor country. And what we know in the 21st century is, is that the most important tools for economic opportunity are making sure the young people are getting a good education. And my understanding is, is that the education system in Myanmar is still underdeveloped. I think all of you represent the best of Myanmar's students. But my understanding is, there are many villages you go to where there's really no schools, as a practical matter, and many of the schools still teach just how to memorize certain things rather than how to think critically about problems.

And every country at this point, if it wants to succeed, needs to put in place free, compulsory education for its young people, because they just can't succeed unless they have some basic skills. They have to be able to read. They have to be able to do mathematics. They have to have some familiarity with computers. They have to be able to understand basic principles of science. If you don't have those basic tools, then it's very hard to find a decent job in today's economy.

Now, because Myanmar is still very agricultural, I think issues of land reform and trying to increase productivity in the agricultural sector is also a very immediate and urgent problem. This is true not just in Myanmar, this is true in many relatively poor countries. In Africa, for example, we initiated something called Feed the Future, and the whole goal is to improve the productivity of farmers. And farmers in many poor countries, they still use the same techniques that they used 200 years ago. They're still using a buffalo or an ox and still waiting on the rains. And sometimes, the new techniques, they're not necessarily expensive; it's just a matter of applying them scientifically.

And if you double yields for a farm and double income for farmers in a country like Myanmar, suddenly, you have increased wealth, which means that some people now can start businesses. Maybe now somebody can take some of the profits they made and invest in a tractor, or they can start processing the rice that they produce so that they can gain more value. Or they may be able to buy a smartphone so they know what the prices are in the market and not get taken advantage of. So just small changes are really important.

Now, my understanding—and I'm not expert—is that some of that will also require some reforms in terms of land ownership and leasing so that people can keep the products of their labor, as opposed to just being essentially what we call sharecroppers in the United States, where you're working the land, but you're giving it over to somebody else and never getting ahead.

So those are just two examples of things that I think will happen naturally if you've got a democratic system in place. Okay?

All right, it's a young lady's turn. So this young lady in the glasses right here. She was waving very hard, so she must have an excellent question. She's coming.

Q. Good morning. My name is—[*inaudible*].

The President. It's afternoon though. [*Laughter*] Maybe you've been waiting here since morning. [*Laughter*] But now it's the afternoon.

Information Technology/Internet Access/Intellectual Property

Q. But you can call me Amy. I'm from the—YSEALI member. I want to ask one question. My question is, now we are working on IT field, so America is already doubled up in IT. So can you provide any development center of IT and job opportunity for youth? Yes.

The President. Well, the—I was just talking to the civil society groups, and there was one person there who mentioned that Internet penetration in Myanmar is still only about 9 percent, which means there's enormous room for growth. The issue for IT in a country like Myanmar is, first of all, setting up the infrastructure—whether it's wireless or other methods—so that people can start communicating. And once the hardware is in place, then where the real development happens is in the software. And that's where it's really a matter of

education, training, and developing a homegrown capacity.

And so what we'll do is, we'll work with both civil society groups, as well as the Government, to find opportunities where we can promote the building of the infrastructure that's required. But what's really going to be important is also making sure that young people are trained.

And part of what's going to have to happen is, in the United States, most of the IT development happened through the private sector. Government invested in research, and so the idea of the Internet was developed with the help of Government funding. But what became then the World Wide Web and then all the applications and social media and all that was really developed through the private sector. So part of what has to happen once democracy is installed in Myanmar is then also looking at, how are you structuring laws to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship?

So, for example, one of the debates that we're having in trade negotiations with Asian countries in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the big trade initiative that we're moving forward, is the need to protect intellectual property. If you invent a better tractor, then in the United States, you go to a patent office, and you register your patent. You show that this is a new invention. And if anybody then wants to produce this new tractor, they have to pay you for using your idea. The same is true for intellectual property. If you come up with the idea of Facebook, then you need to be able to get a benefit from this idea.

And one of the problems, I think, that you still have in many countries in Southeast Asia and around the world is weak intellectual property protections, which means that if you're an entrepreneur with a good idea, you don't want to start your business here, because next thing you know, somebody steals your idea and they just start their own business. So you'd rather start the idea in the United States, where you know that it will be protected. And then, maybe you will lease it to other countries, but the jobs and the opportunities will have been created someplace else.

So setting up regulatory structures, protections for intellectual property, all those things are also going to be very important in order to get a strong IT culture and an innovation culture here in Myanmar and throughout the region.

Okay, it's a man's turn. Let's see. You know, I'm going to go with this guy right here. Okay. Hold on a second. Now, you're not going to read that whole thing, are you? [*Laughter*] Because——

Q. I want to request you somewhat—[*inaudible*]—questions——

The President. I think you have to summarize it quickly because we don't want——

Q. Yes, yes, just want to give you a kind of sheet, cheat sheet.

The President. Yes, I'll take the sheet. [*Laughter*]

Q. Okay. But—thank you.

The President. There you go. All right.

Q. I have it only one question for you.

The President. I will just—there are like—there are 20 questions on here. [*Laughter*]

Q. Just want you to know a question.

The President. Why don't you just ask me one of them? I'll read the rest.

Importance of National Identity/Protection of Minority Rights

Q. Okay. My question, as you know—may I know your opinion about, like, how to create national identity or, like, new Myanmar identity—[*inaudible*]—a man, different, strong identity in our country? Thank you.

The President. Yes. Well, that's a great question. Yes, I was talking about this with the civil society groups because we are very supportive of the efforts to get a cease-fire and a peace process with the ethnic groups that have been engaged in armed conflict for a long time. And we've already talked about some of the problems that the Muslim populations have faced in Rakhine State.

But what I said to the civil society groups is, yes, it is important to protect specific ethnic groups from discrimination. And it is natural in a democracy that ethnic groups organize among themselves to be heard in the halls of

power. So, in the United States, for example, as its democracy developed, the Irish in big cities, they came together, and they built organizations, and they were able to promote the interests of Irish Americans. And African Americans, when they were seeking their freedom, you had organizations like the NAACP that promoted the interests of African Americans. So there's nothing wrong with groups organizing around ethnic identity or around economic interests or around regional concerns. That's how a democracy naturally works, right? You get with people who agree with you or who are like you to make sure that your concerns are heard.

But what I said is that it is important for a democracy that people's identities are also a national identity. If you walk down the streets of New York City, you will see people looking more different than this group right here. You'll see blue-eyed, blond people. You'll see dark-skinned, Black people. You'll see Asians. You'll see Muslims. You'll see—but if you ask any of those people, "What are you?"—"I'm an American." Now, I may be an African American or an Asian American or an Irish American, but the first thing they'll say is, "I'm an American."

And if you don't have that sense of national unity, then it's very hard for a country to succeed, particularly a small country like Myanmar. I mean, if people think in terms of ethnic identity before national identity, then I think over time, the country will start breaking apart and democracy will not work. So there has to be a sense of common purpose.

But that's not an excuse then for majority groups to say "don't complain" to ethnic minorities, because the ethnic minorities may have some real complaints. And part of what is important for the majority groups to do, if in fact you have a national identity, that means that you've got to be concerned with a minority also because it reflects badly on your country if somebody from a minority group is not being treated fairly.

America could not live up to its potential until it treated its Black citizens fairly. I mean, that's just a fact: that that was a stain on America when an entire group of people couldn't vote or didn't have legal protections. Because it made all the Declarations of Independence and Constitution and rule of law, it made that seem like an illusion.

And so, when the civil rights happened—movement happened in the United States, that wasn't just a victory for African Americans, that was a victory for America because what it showed was that the whole country was going to be concerned about everybody, not just about some people. And it was a victory for America's national identity that it was treating minorities fairly.

And that's, I think, how every country in ASEAN, including Myanmar, needs to think about these problems. You need to respect people's differences. You need to be attentive to the grievances of minorities that may be discriminated against. But both the majority and the minority, the powerful and the powerless, also have to have a sense of national identity in order to be successful. Okay?

We've got time for two more questions. Two more. He said one, but I'm going to take two.

See, I'm—it's going to be one of you three. What do you think? Who should—out of the three of you, who should I call on? Are you friends? Okay, so why don't you decide? [*Laughter*] Who's—what do you think? Okay, yes, rock, paper, scissors. Let's see. [*Laughter*] Who won? Okay, go ahead. There you go. So—[*applause*].

What did you win with? Were you scissors or rock? Were you rock or scissors or paper?

Q. Rock.

The President. Rock.

Q. I rock!

The President. You rock?

Q. Yes.

The President. Yes.

Education

Q. Mingalarbar, Mr. President. I am—[*inaudible*]—from "Burma in Perspective" class in American Center. Right now we're working on a documentary on Yangon University, Congregation Hall, where you spoke the last time you came.

The President. Yes, last time I was here.

Q. Yes. So, as you know, Yangon University has reopened last year, 2013. So do think it is a good start to rebuild the higher education statuses in Burma?

The President. Well, I think it's a great start. But I think, as I said before, one of the biggest challenges Myanmar is going to face is rebuilding its education system. And I think it has to start early. It has to start from the youngest ages.

One of the things that we've learned from science is that the most that you will ever learn in your entire life happens from the time you're born until you're 3 years old. Between your birth and the age of 3, that's when your brain is developing the most. And what we've learned, for example, is that when you read—when parents read to young children even before the children know how to read, the children are building a vocabulary that will put them in a strong position then to learn how to read later on because they've heard the words over and over again.

And so I just make that point because it shows that if you're only worried about university education, but you're not worrying about what happens to children when they're 3, 4, 5, 6 years old, then you're missing the foundation for a good education system.

And this is true in the United States as well. We've got the best university system in the world. Obviously, I'm biased because I'm the President of the United States, so I think everything in the United States is the best in the world. [*Laughter*]

But I think anybody objectively would say that we have a system of universities and colleges that is unequaled anyplace else. But we still have problems. And one of the things that I'm spending a lot of time on reform is the elementary, secondary school levels. And also, even earlier, having what we call early childhood education to get children off to a good start so that by the time they go to school, they already know their alphabet, and they can already start reading at an early age. And I hope that that ends up being a basic emphasis here in Myanmar.

But I also think that from what I've heard, one of the reforms that will need to take place in universities here is to make sure that in all the departments there is the ability for universities and students to shape curriculums and to have access to information from everywhere around the world and that it's not just a narrow process of indoctrination. Because the best universities are ones that teach you how to think, not what to think, right? A good education is not just knowing facts, although you need to know facts. You need to know that two plus two is four, it's not five. That's an important fact. But you also need to know how to ask questions and how to critically analyze a problem and how to be able to distinguish between fact and opinion and how to compare two different ideas.

And I think there's a danger sometimes in countries that are—don't have a long tradition of higher education to try to narrow the learning process, as opposed to open it up. And I think that that's something that I'm sure university students here in Myanmar will want to express during the course of this transition period and the reforms that are taking place.

All right, I've got time for one more question. Wait, wait, wait. No point in yelling. First of all, all the women have to put their hands down because I told you it was going to be boy, girl, boy, girl. And the second thing is, how many students are there from countries other than Myanmar who are here? Okay, so I think that in the interest of ASEAN unity, and because this is a Young Southeast Asian Leaders forum, I've got to ask——

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. No, no, no, first of all, you can't—I told you already that women aren't going to get a chance to ask the next question. Where are you from?

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Well, you're still in Burma. All right. Where you from? [*Laughter*] Sit down. Where you from? All right, let me—I'm going to ask this guy, guy from the Philippines right here. Come on. You just started yelling. I didn't even call on you. [*Laughter*]

Global Efforts To Combat Climate Change

Q. Good afternoon, Mr. President. My name is Ryan Louis Madrid. I'm from the Philippines. I'm one of the person you mentioned.

The President. I was just talking about you.

Q. Yes. And, yes, it gave me a little tear in my eyes. So thank you so much for putting us—making me as, like, one of the models maybe for what youth can do for change.

But my question really is, I just learned recently that the U.S. and ASEAN will be making a climate change statement. I'd like to know if you could tell us what this is all about and how this would be different from the Kyoto Protocol and other climate change efforts in making real efforts towards curbing climate change. Thank you.

The President. Good. So, first of all, let's just establish the science and the facts. The planet is getting warmer. The reason the planet is getting warmer is because human activity is releasing greenhouse gases that is trapping heat and increasing temperatures. And because you start getting a negative feedback loop, as it gets hotter, ice melts. The permafrost in places like Siberia start releasing methane gases. Ice packs in Greenland start melting. That then makes it even warmer. And we're on a trajectory in which the temperatures could rise so high that it would have catastrophic impacts around the world because temperatures start changing, weather patterns shift. Traditional monsoon seasons might completely reverse themselves. Areas that once used to have arable land suddenly now have long droughts. Areas that used to be temperate suddenly get floods. We're seeing the impacts in developed countries. We see it in my own country. And we're seeing impacts in poor countries. And we're seeing impacts obviously in island nations where if the temperatures continue to rise, we'll end up with oceans that are 2 feet or 3 feet higher, and it could swallow up entire countries.

So this is perhaps the central challenge, the most important challenge facing humanity in the 21st century, is getting control of this.

Now, the good news is that we can begin to slow down that process so that the temperatures only go up a certain level, and although we'll have to make some adaptations, it doesn't become catastrophic. But in order to do that, we have to start transitioning our economies to clean energy rather than dirty energy. It means that we have to start developing wind power and solar power. It means that societies have to use energy more efficiently. It means that we have to find ways to use safe nuclear power because they don't—that doesn't emit greenhouse gases. So there's no single answer. There's a group of answers to the problem.

And some of you may be aware that the United States and China are the two biggest emitters in the world. The United States had been the biggest emitter; China overtook us. In fairness to China, each individual Chinese person probably uses less energy and emits less greenhouse gases than an individual American. But there are a lot more Chinese than there are Americans.

And if, as China continues to develop, they start matching the United States in how much carbon they release, we'll never survive. None of us. Same is true with India, just because of the size of its populations. And the same is true with Southeast Asia, which, as I said before, contains 1 out of every 10 people in the world.

So all of us are going to have to be a part of this. And the United States and China—in a meeting with President Xi—we announced that we are both going to set bold targets for greenhouse gas reductions from 2020 forward.

What we're encouraging ASEAN to do—individual ASEAN countries—is also to come up with goals for how they are going to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. And if all countries around the world put forward ambitious goals at a Paris conference that we're going to be having in 2015, then this can serve at the basis for collective action in reducing greenhouse gases.

But although we know what we need to do, the transition will be difficult because, just to give you one example, Indonesia——

Audience member. Yay!

The President. You might not want to cheer about this—[*laughter*]—has been cutting down its forests at a very high rate in order to accommodate the palm oil industry. Now, the palm oil industry is very lucrative, and you have some very big landholders and big companies who are making a lot of money from the palm oil industry. And they're—it creates some jobs. But when you just deforest entire sections of Sumatra or Borneo, that can end up having a devastating effect on the climate.

There are countries in ASEAN that subsidize energy. Now, oftentimes, this is with the best of intentions. The idea would be, we want to make gasoline cheaper or electricity cheaper so that poor people can afford it. The problem is that when you subsidize energy, there's no incentive to use less energy. So, typically, when you have a lot of fuel subsidies, those economies are very inefficient in how they use energy, and they generate more pollution.

The countries that are most efficient in energy use, not only do they not subsidize energy, in fact, they tax energy use. So you look, like—in a country like Norway, which produces a lot of oil, but gasoline there is still 6 or 7 U.S. dollars a gallon, which in liters—who wants to do a liter conversion for me? Anyway, it's very expensive.

So part of what we hope each country in ASEAN commits to is to take the steps that will be required to reduce or at least slow the growth of its carbon emissions and then slowly start reducing them. And it doesn't have to be overnight, but the transition has to begin.

So, if you look at a country like Indonesia, making a commitment to reduce deforestation, reduce and eventually end fuel subsidies, those two things alone could probably help Indonesia meet a very bold carbon reduction goal.

In the United States, I've instructed my Environmental Protection Agency to regulate the amount of greenhouse gases that power plants can send into the atmosphere. And we've doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars. So, in a few years, by the middle of the next century, by 2025, you won't be able to sell a car in the United States unless it is delivering twice as much mileage for every gallon of gas.

And so you can build in transition times to get this done. But we have to start now. And this is probably a good place for me to end by just saying that the issue of climate change is a perfect example about—of why young people have to lead.

Because old people, they've created a mess, and then they'll be gone. And then you—[*applause*]—you're the ones who have to deal with it. And also what happens is old people get set in their ways. So the older you get, the more likely you are to say, "That's how it's always been, so that's how I'm going to keep on doing it," even if there's a better way to do things.

Young people, they're asking, well, why do I have to do it that way? Let's try it this way. And that kind of willingness to accept challenges and try things in a new way, to not be stuck in the past, but to look towards the future, that's what all of you represent.

So I'm hopeful that you have a chance to participate in our Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Fellows Program. Maybe I'll see some of you in the United States. I'm sure all of you are going to do great things. And I hope all of you dream big and then work hard to achieve those dreams.

Okay? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:43 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Leader Aung San Suu Kyi, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Thura Shwe Mann, and Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Khin Aung Myint of Burma; Lamin Oo, producer, "This Land Is Our Land"; Wai Wai Nu, founder and program director, Women Peace Network Arakan; Min Ko Naing, cofounder, 88 Generation (Peace and Open Society); and former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia

Joint Statement by President Obama, President Thein Sein of Burma, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt of Denmark, and the International Labour Organization

November 14, 2014

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the United States of America, Japan, Denmark and the International Labour Organization (ILO) today are jointly launching a new *Initiative to Promote Fundamental Labor Rights and Practices in Myanmar*. The *Initiative* is designed to: 1) improve Myanmar's system of labor administration through a multi-year labor law reform and capacity building plan (labor reform plan); and 2) foster strong relations among businesses, workers, civil society organizations, and the Government of Myanmar through a stakeholder consultative mechanism. The *Initiative* is intended to build upon Myanmar's existing labor reform efforts, including ongoing legislative reform activities supported by the ILO. To that end, the labor reform plan developed under this *Initiative* is intended to serve as a blueprint to prioritize legal changes, coordinate donor assistance, and strengthen government capacity to implement those reforms in close cooperation with civil society representatives. The stakeholder consultative mechanism is intended to provide a forum for business, labor, and other civil society representatives to provide guidance on the development of the labor reform plan to the government and to foster constructive relationships among them.

As an initial step in the development of the *Initiative*, the Government of Myanmar established the Technical Committee Cluster on Labor Law Reform and Institutional Capacity Building ("Labor Law Reform Cluster") in October 2014 under the Employment Opportunities Sector Working Group (EOSWG). The EOSWG is one of 15 Sector Working Groups established by the Government of Myanmar under the Nay Pyi Taw Accord for Effective Development Cooperation. This Labor Law Reform Cluster is intended to provide donor partners, stakeholders, and the ILO a forum to support the Government of Myanmar and civil society in the development of the labor reform plan. To support this process, the United States is providing initial funding to the ILO for a labor law expert to advise the government on its reform efforts. The *Initiative* participants also envision organizing a broad stakeholder forum in Myanmar in early 2015 to provide input on the development of the labor reform plan.

The participating governments and the ILO welcome the engagement of other interested governments, stakeholders, and institutions in support of this *Initiative*. Myanmar is at a pivotal stage of its political and economic development, and the country's future depends on its ability to grow its economy, create decent work, and re-integrate into the global economy. Governments and stakeholders have a unique opportunity to promote lasting positive development in Myanmar by working together to improve an important component of its investment environment—its labor regime. The *Initiative* is designed to support the government and stakeholders in promoting international labor standards and responsible business practices, helping to make Myanmar an attractive sourcing and investment destination, protecting Myanmar's workers and supporting its businesses, and advancing Myanmar's overall sustainable growth and development.

NOTE: The joint statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 13, but due to the 11½-hour time difference between Washington, DC, and Rangoon, Burma, it carries a release date of November 14. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's Weekly Address
November 15, 2014

Hi, everybody. Over the past year, more than 10 million Americans have gained the financial security and peace of mind that comes with health insurance. More than 7 million people enrolled in affordable coverage by visiting healthcare.gov or going to the marketplace in their State. On average, they're paying just $82 a month for coverage. For a lot of people, that's less than a cell phone bill or a cable bill. Insurance companies can no longer deny you coverage just because you have a preexisting condition, and they now have to cover free preventive care like checkups and mammograms.

If you missed your chance to get covered last year, here's the good news. Starting November 15, today, you can go online or call 1–800–318–2596 and get covered for 2015. And we've spent the last year improving and upgrading healthcare.gov to make it faster and easier to use.

If you already buy insurance through the online marketplace, now is the time to take a look at some of the new options for next year. You might be able to save more money or find a plan that fits your family's needs even better than the one you've got now. If you haven't signed up for insurance yet, this is your chance. Odds are, you'll qualify for tax credits to help you afford it.

But this window won't stay open forever. You only have 3 months to shop for plans, so it's worth starting right away. And it might make a big difference for your family's bottom line.

Last year, I got an e-mail from a woman named Amy Williams, in Augusta, Georgia. She and her husband are self-employed in the trucking business. For years, they paid about $1,200 a month for their health insurance. Then, they checked out healthcare.gov. They found a plan with coverage they liked, and it was way less expensive. She says that they've saved around $13,000 on their premiums this year alone.

Stories like Amy's are why we fought so hard to pass the Affordable Care Act: to help more families breathe a little easier. In part because this law is working, health care prices have grown at their slowest rate in nearly 50 years. And this year, insurance premiums for families who are covered through an employer grew at a rate tied for the lowest on record.

So spread the word. Tell your friends and family members to get covered. Talk to folks in your church or your classroom. Tell them to take a few minutes to check out healthcare.gov or cuidadodesalud.gov or call 1–800–318–2596. It can make a big difference in their lives. Let them know that it's easy, it's affordable, and that they have just 3 months, starting today, November 15, to sign up. Together, we can make sure that even more of America gets covered in the year ahead.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5 p.m. on November 6 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on November 15. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 14, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 15.

Remarks at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia
November 15, 2014

Thank you so much! Thank you, everybody. Everybody, please have a seat. Hello, Brisbane! Oh, it's good to be back in Australia. I love Australia, I really do. The only problem with Australia is, every time I come here, I've got to sit in conference rooms and talk to politicians instead of go to the beach. [*Laughter*]

To Chancellor Story, Professor Høj, faculty and staff, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, and most of all, the students of the

University of Queensland: It is great to be here at UQ. I know that we are joined by students from universities across this city and some high school students as well. And so I want to thank all of the young people especially for welcoming me here today.

On my last visit to this magnificent country 3 years ago, I had the privilege to meet some of the First Australians; we're joined by some today. So I want to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of this land and by paying my respects to your elders, past and present.

This university is recognized as one of the world's great institutions of science and teaching. Your research led to the vaccine that protects women and girls around the world from cervical cancer. Your innovations have transformed how we treat disease and how we unlock new discoveries. Your studies have warned the world about the urgent threat of climate change. In fact, last year, I even tweeted one of your studies in my 31—to my 31 million followers on Twitter. [*Laughter*] Just bragging a little bit. I don't think that's quite as much as Lady Gaga, but it's still pretty good. [*Laughter*] That's still not bad.

I thank Prime Minister Abbott and the people of Brisbane and Queensland for hosting us at the G–20 summit. This city, this part of Australia, is just stunning. "Beautiful one day, and then perfect the next." [*Laughter*] That's what I understand. We travel a lot around the world. My staff was very excited for "Bris Vegas." [*Laughter*] When I arrived they advised I needed some four-X. [*Laughter*] You have some? [*Laughter*]

Part of the reason I have fond memories of Australia is I spent some time here as a boy when I was traveling between Hawaii and Indonesia, where I lived for several years. And when I returned 3 years ago as President, I had the same feelings that I remembered as a child: the warmth of the people of Australia, the sense of humor. I learned to speak a little "strine." [*Laughter*] I'm tempted to "give it a burl." That's about as far as I can go, actually.

But I do want to take this opportunity to express once again the gratitude of the American people for the extraordinary alliance with Australia. I tell my friends and family and people that I meet that there is an incredible commonality between Australia and the United States. And whether that's because so many of us traveled here as immigrants, some voluntary, some not; whether it's because of the wide open spaces and the sense of a frontier culture, there's a bond between our two countries.

And Australia really is everything that you would want in a friend and in an ally. We're cut from the same cloth: immigrants from an old world who build a new nation. We're inspired by the same ideals of equality and opportunity, the belief everybody deserves a fair go, a fair shot. And we share that same spirit—that confidence and optimism—that the future is ours to make, that we don't have to carry with us all the baggage from the past, that we can leave this world a better, safer, more just place for future generations. And that's what brings me here today: the future that we can build together, here in the Asia-Pacific region.

Now, this week, I've traveled more than 15,000 miles, from America to China to Burma to Australia. I have no idea what time it is right now. [*Laughter*] I'm completely upside down. But despite that distance, we know that our world is getting smaller. One of Australia's great writers spoke of this, a son of Brisbane and a graduate of this university, David Malouf. And he said, "In that shrinking of distance that is characteristic of our contemporary world, even the Pacific, largest of oceans, has become a lake." Even the Pacific has become a lake.

And you see it here on this campus, where you welcome students from all across Asia and around the world, including a number of Americans. You go on exchanges, and we're proud to welcome so many of you to the United States. You walk the streets of this city, and you hear Chinese, Vietnamese, Bahasa Indonesia, Korean, Hindi. And in many neighborhoods, more than half the people you meet were born somewhere else. This is a global city in a globalized world.

And I often tell young people in America that, even with today's challenges, this is the

best time in history to be alive. Never in the history of humanity have people lived longer, are they more likely to be healthy, more likely to be enjoying basic security. The world is actually much less violent today—you wouldn't know it from watching television—than it once was.

And that's true here in the Asia-Pacific as well. Countries once ravaged by war, like South Korea and Japan, are among the world's most advanced economies. From the Philippines to Indonesia, dictatorships have given way to genuine democracies. In China and across the region, hundreds of millions of people have been lifted from poverty in the span of one generation, joining a global middle class. Empowered by technology, you—the young people, in particular, of this region—are connecting and collaborating across borders and cultures like never before as you seek to build a new future.

So the opportunities today are limitless. And I don't watch a lot of Australian television, so—as you might imagine, because I'm really far away. [*Laughter*] So I don't know whether some of the same tendencies that we see in the United States—a focus on conflict and disasters and problems—dominate what's fed to us visually every single day. But when you look at the facts, opportunities are limitless for this generation. You're living in an extraordinary time.

But what is also true that—is that alongside this dynamism, there are genuine dangers that can undermine progress. And we can't look at those problems through rose-tinted glasses. North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, that's a problem. Disputes over territory, remote islands and rocky shoals that threaten to spiral into confrontation.

The failure to uphold universal human rights, denying justice to citizens and denying countries their full potential. Economic inequality and extreme poverty that are a recipe for instability. And energy demands in growing cities that also hasten trends towards a changing climate. Indeed, the same technologies that empower citizens like you also give oppressive regimes new tools to stifle dissent.

So the question that we face is, which of these futures will define the Asia-Pacific in the century to come? Do we move towards further integration, more justice, more peace? Or do we move towards disorder and conflict? Those are our choices. Conflict or cooperation? Oppression or liberty?

Here in Australia, 3 years ago, in your Parliament, I made it clear where the United States stands. We believe that nations and peoples have the right to live in security and peace; that an effective security order for Asia must be based not on spheres of influence or coercion or intimidation, where big nations bully the small, but on alliances of mutual security, international law, international norms that are upheld, and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

We believe in open markets and trade that is fair and free; a level playing field where economies play by the same rules; where the purpose of trade is not simply to extract resources from the ground, but to build true partnerships that raise capacity and living standards in poor countries; where small-business owners and entrepreneurs and innovators have the freedom to dream and create and flourish; and how well a country does is based on how well they empower their individual citizens.

And we believe in democracy: that the only real source of legitimacy is the consent of the people; that every individual is born equal with fundamental rights, inalienable rights; and that it is the responsibility of governments to uphold these rights. This is what we stand for. That is our vision, the future America is working towards in the Asia-Pacific, with allies and with friends.

Now, as a Pacific power, the United States has invested our blood and treasure to advance this vision. We don't just talk about it, we invest in this vision. Generations of Americans have served and died in the Asia-Pacific so that the people of the region might live free. So no one should ever question our resolve or our commitment to our allies.

When I assumed office, leaders and people across the region were expressing their desire for greater American engagement. And so, as

President, I decided that—given the importance of this region to American security, to American prosperity—the United States would rebalance our foreign policy and play a larger and lasting role in this region. And that's exactly what we've done.

Today, our alliances, including with Australia, are stronger than they have ever been. American exports to this region have reached record levels. We've deepened our cooperation with emerging powers and regional organizations, especially in Southeast Asia. We expanded our partnerships with citizens as they've worked to bolster their democracies. And we've shown that, whether it's a tsunami or an earthquake or a typhoon, when our friends are in need, America shows up. We are there to help. In good times and in bad, you can count on the United States of America.

Now, there have been times when people have been skeptical of this rebalancing. They've—they're wondering whether America has the staying power to sustain it. And it's true that in recent years, pressing events around the world demand our attention. As the world's only superpower, the United States has unique responsibilities that we gladly embrace. We're leading the international community in the fight to destroy the terrorist group ISIL. We're leading in dealing with Ebola in West Africa and in opposing Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which is a threat to the world, as we saw in the appalling shoot-down of MH17, a tragedy that took so many innocent lives, among them your fellow citizens. And as your ally and friend, America shares the grief of these Australian families, and we share the determination of your nation for justice and accountability. So yes, we have a range of responsibilities. That's the deal. It's a burden we gladly shoulder.

But even in each of these international efforts, some of our strongest partners are our allies and friends in this region, including Australia. So meeting these other challenges in the world is not a distraction from our engagement in this region, it reinforces our engagement in this region. Our rebalance is not only about the United States doing more in Asia, it's also about the Asia-Pacific region doing more with us around the world.

So I'm here today to say that American leadership in the Asia-Pacific will always be a fundamental focus of my foreign policy. It won't always make the headlines. It won't always be measured in the number of trips I make, although I do keep coming back. [*Laughter*] But day in and day out, steadily and deliberately, we will continue to deepen our engagement using every element of American power: diplomacy, military, economic, development, the power of our values and our ideals.

And so, with the time I have left, I want to describe specifically what America intends to do in the coming years. First, the United States will continue strengthening our alliances. With Japan, we'll finalize new defense guidelines and keep realigning our forces for the future. With the Republic of Korea, we'll deepen our collaboration, including on missile defense, to deter and defend against North Korean threats. With the Philippines, we'll train and exercise more to prepare for challenges from counterterrorism and piracy to humanitarian crises and disaster relief. And here in Australia, more U.S. marines will rotate through to promote regional stability, alongside your "diggers."

Although I will say when I went out to Darwin to inaugurate the new rotation of our U.S. marines there, that the mayor, I think it was, took out crocodile insurance, which disturbed me. [*Laughter*] I mean, I was flattered that he took out insurance on my behalf. [*Laughter*] But I did ask my Ambassador what this was all about. [*Laughter*] And he described to me how crocodiles kill more people than sharks, and there are just a lot of things in Australia that can kill you. [*Laughter*] But that's an aside. [*Laughter*]

We have an ironclad commitment to the sovereignty, independence, and security of every ally. And we'll expand cooperation between allies, because we believe we're stronger when we stand together.

The United States will continue to modernize our defense posture across this region. We'll deploy more of our most advanced military capabilities to keep the peace and deter

aggression. Our presence will be more distributed, including in Southeast Asia with partners like Singapore. And we'll increase military training and education, including working with the military partners we have in this region around the respect for human rights by military and police. And by the end of this decade, a majority of our Navy and Air Force fleets will be based out of the Pacific, because the United States is and will always be a Pacific power.

And keep in mind, we do this without any territorial claims. We do this based on our belief that a region that is peaceful and prosperous is good for us, and it's good for the world.

The United States will continue broadening our cooperation with emerging powers and emerging economies. We intend to help Vietnam pursue economic reforms and new maritime capabilities. We'll continue to move ahead with our comprehensive partnership with Indonesia, which is a strong example of diversity and pluralism. We'll continue to expand ties with Malaysia, a growing center of entrepreneurship and innovation. And we support a greater role in the Asia-Pacific for India, which is the world's largest democracy.

The United States will continue expanding our engagement with regional institutions, because together, we can meet shared challenges, from preventing the horror of human trafficking to countering violent extremism, to stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. Together, we can improve maritime security, upholding the freedom of navigation and encouraging territorial disputes are resolved peacefully. We'll work with partners to develop the East Asia Summit into the region's leading forum for addressing political and security challenges. And we'll support ASEAN's effort to reach a code of conduct with China that reinforces international law in the South China Sea.

And speaking of China, the United States will continue to pursue a constructive relationship with China. By virtue of its size and its remarkable growth, China will inevitably play a critical role in the future of this region. And the question is, what kind of role will it play? I just came from Beijing, and as I said there, the United States welcomes the continuing rise of a China that is peaceful and prosperous and stable and that plays a responsible role in world affairs. It is a remarkable achievement that millions of people have been lifted out of poverty in China because of the extraordinary growth rates that they've experienced. That is a good thing. We should want and welcome that kind of development.

And if in fact China is playing the role of a responsible actor that is peaceful and prosperous and stable, that is good for this region, it's good for the world, it's good for the United States. So we'll pursue cooperation with China where our interests overlap or align. And there are significant areas of overlap: more trade and investment, more communications between our militaries to prevent misunderstandings or possible conflict, more travel and exchanges between our people, and more cooperation on global challenges, from Ebola to climate change.

But in this engagement, we are also encouraging China to adhere to the same rules as other nations, whether in trade or on the seas. And in this engagement, we will continue to be frank about where there are differences, because America will continue to stand up for our interests and principles, including our unwavering support for the fundamental human rights of all people.

We do not benefit from a relationship with China or any other country in which we put our values and our ideals aside. And for the young people here, practicality is a good thing. There are times where compromise is necessary. That's part of wisdom. But it's also important to hang on to what you believe, to know what you believe and then be willing to stand up for it. And what's true for individuals is also true for countries.

The United States will continue to promote economic growth that is sustained and shared. So we're going to work with APEC to tear down barriers to trade and investment and combat the corruption that steals from so many citizens. We'll keep opposing special preferences for state-owned companies. We'll oppose cybertheft of trade secrets. We'll work

with partners to invest in the region's infrastructure in a way that's open and transparent. And we'll support reforms that help economies transition to models that boost domestic demand and invest in people and their education and their skills.

We'll keep leading the effort to realize the Trans-Pacific Partnership to lower barriers, open markets, export goods, and create good jobs for our people. But with the 12 countries of the TPP making up nearly 40 percent of the global economy, this is also about something bigger. It is our chance to put in place new, high standards for trade in the 21st century that uphold our values. So, for example, we are pushing new standards in this trade agreement, requiring countries that participate to protect their workers better and to protect the environment better and protect intellectual property that unleashes innovation and meet baseline standards to ensure transparency of—and rule of law.

It's about a future where instead of being dependent on a single market, countries integrate their economies so they're innovating and growing together. That's what TPP does. That's why it would be a historic achievement. That's why I believe so strongly that we need to get it done, and not just for our countries, but for the world.

But that's also why it's hard, because we're asking all these countries at various stages of development to up their game. And it requires big transitions for a lot of these countries, including for the United States. And TPP is just one part of our overall focus on growing the global economy. That's what the G–20 meetings are all about.

Over the last few years, the United States has put more people back to work than all other advanced economies combined. But America can't be expected to just carry the world economy on our back. So, here in Brisbane, the G–20 has a responsibility to act: to boost demand and invest more in infrastructure and create good jobs for the people of all our nations.

As we develop, as we focus on our economy, we cannot forget the need to lead on the global fight against climate change. Now, I know that's—[*applause*]—I know there's been a healthy debate in this country about it. [*Laughter*] Here in the Asia-Pacific, nobody has more at stake when it comes to thinking about and then acting on climate change.

Here, a climate that increases in temperature will mean more extreme and frequent storms, more flooding, rising seas that submerge Pacific islands. Here in Australia, it means longer droughts, more wildfires. The incredible natural glory of the Great Barrier Reef is threatened. Worldwide, this past summer was the hottest on record. No nation is immune, and every nation has a responsibility to do its part.

And you'll recall at the beginning, I said the United States and Australia has a lot in common. Well, one of the things we have in common is, we produce a lot of carbon. Part of it is this legacy of wide-open spaces and the frontier mentality and this incredible abundance of resources. And so, historically, we have not been the most energy efficient of nations, which means we've got to step up.

In the United States, our carbon pollution is near its lowest levels in almost two decades. I'm very proud of that. Under my Climate Action Plan, we intend to do more. In Beijing, I announced our ambitious new goal: reducing our net greenhouse gas emissions by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by the year 2025, which will double the pace at which we're reducing carbon pollution in the United States. Now, in a historic step, China made its own commitment, for the first time, agreeing to slow, peak, and then reverse the course of China's carbon emissions. And the reason that's so important is because if China, as it develops, adapts the same per capita carbon emissions as advanced economies like the United States or Australia, this planet doesn't stand a chance, because they've got a lot more people.

So them setting up a target sends a powerful message to the world that all countries—whether you are a developed country, a developing country, or somewhere in between—you've got to be able to overcome old divides, look squarely at the science, and reach a strong

global climate agreement next year. And if China and the United States can agree on this, then the world can agree on this. We can get this done. And it is necessary for us to get it done. Because I have not had time to go to the Great Barrier Reef—[*laughter*]—and I want to come back, and I want my daughters to be able to come back, and I want them to be able to bring their daughters or sons to visit. And I want that there 50 years from now.

Now, today I'm announcing that the United States will take another important step. We are going to contribute $3 billion to the Green Climate Fund so we can help developing nations deal with climate change. So, along with the other nations that have pledged support, this gives us the opportunity to help vulnerable communities with an early warning system, with stronger defenses against storm surge, climate-resilient infrastructure. It allows us to help farmers plant more durable crops. And it allows us to help developing countries break out of this false choice between development and pollution; let them leapfrog some of the dirty industries that powered our development, go straight to a clean energy economy that allows them to grow, create jobs, and at the same time, reduce their carbon pollution.

So we've very proud of the work that we have already done. We are mindful of the great work that still has to be done on this issue. But let me say, particularly again to the young people here: Combating climate change cannot be the work of governments alone. Citizens, especially the next generation, you have to keep raising your voices, because you deserve to live your lives in a world that is cleaner and that is healthier and that is sustainable. But that is not going to happen unless you are heard.

It is in the nature of things, it is in the nature of the world that those of us who start getting gray hair are a little set in our ways, that interests are entrenched, not because people are bad people, it's just that's how we've been doing things. And we make investments, and companies start depending on certain energy sources, and change is uncomfortable and difficult. And that's why it's so important for the next generation to be able to step in and say, no, it doesn't have to be this way. You have the power to imagine a new future in a way that some of the older folks don't always have.

And the same is true when it comes to issues of democracy and human rights. There are times where when we speak out on these issues we are told that democracy is just a Western value. I fundamentally disagree with that. Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, they have built thriving democracies. Filipinos showed us the strength of people power. Indonesians just voted in a historic election. I just came from Burma; this is a place that for 40 years was under the grip of a military junta, one of the most closed and oppressive nations on Earth. And there, I was inspired by citizens and civil society and Parliamentarians who are now working to sustain a transition to a democratic future. I had a town hall meeting with young people like you, in which they were asking, what does it mean to create rule of law? And how should we deal with ethnic diversity in our city? You could feel the excitement. What does a free press look like, and how does it operate? And how do we make sure that journalism is responsible? And this incredible ferment and debate that's taking place.

Those young people, they want the same things that you do. The notion that somehow, they're less interested in opportunity or less interested in avoiding arbitrary arrest or less interested in being censored is fundamentally untrue. Today, people in Hong Kong are speaking out for their universal rights.

And so, here in Asia and around the world, America supports free and fair elections, because citizens must be free to choose their own leaders, as in Thailand, where we are urging a quick return to inclusive, civilian rule. We support freedom of assembly and freedom of speech and freedom of the press, a free and open Internet, strong civil societies, because the voices of people must be heard and leaders must be held accountable, even though it's uncomfortable sometimes. I promise you, if you lead a country, there are times where you are aggravated with people voicing opinions that seem to think you're doing something wrong. [*Laughter*] You'd prefer everybody just

praise you. I understand. [*Laughter*] But that's not how societies move forward.

We support strong institutions and independent judiciaries and open government, because the rule of force must give way to the rule of law.

And in that same fashion, the United States will continue to stand up for the inherent dignity of every human being. Now, dignity begins with the most basic of needs: a life free of hunger and disease and want. So yes, we'll speak out on behalf of human rights, but we are also going to invest in the agriculture that allows farmers to feed their families and boost their incomes. We'll invest in the development that promotes growth and helps end the injustice of extreme poverty in places like the Lower Mekong Delta. We intend to partner with all the countries in the region to create stronger public health systems and new treatments that save lives and realize our goals of being the first AIDS-free generation.

And what we've learned from the Ebola outbreak is that in this globalized world, where the Pacific is like a lake, if countries are so poor that they can't afford basic public health infrastructure, that threatens our health. We cannot build a moat around our countries, and we shouldn't try. What we should be doing is making sure everybody has some basic public health systems that allow for early warning when outbreaks of infectious disease may occur. That's not just out of charity. It is in our self-interest.

And again, I want to speak to young people about this. When we talk about these issues of development, when we invest in the well-being of people on the other side of the globe, when we stand up for freedom, including occasionally having to engage in military actions, we don't do that just because we are charitable. We do that because we recognize that we are linked and that if somebody, some child is stricken with a curable disease on the other side of the world, at same point, that could have an impact on our child.

We'll advance human dignity by standing up for the rights of minorities, because no one's equality should ever be denied. We will stand up for freedom of religion—the right of every person to practice their faith as they choose—because we are all children of God and we are all fallible. And the notion that we, as a majority, or the state, should tell somebody else what to believe with respect to their faith is against our basic values.

We will stand up for our gay and lesbian fellow citizens, because they need to be treated equally under the law. We will stand up for the rights and futures of our wives and daughters and partners, because I believe that the best measure of whether a nation is going to be successful is whether they are tapping the talents of their women and treating them as full participants in politics and society and the economy.

And we're going to continue to invest in the future of this region, and that means you, this region's youth—all of you—your optimism, your idealism, your hopes. I see it everywhere I go. I spend a lot of time with young people. I spend a lot of time with old people too. But I prefer spending time with young people. [*Laughter*] I meet them in Tokyo and Seoul and Manila and Jakarta. It's the spirit of young men and women in Kuala Lumpur and Rangoon, who are participating in our Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative. And like you, they're ready to lead.

To the young woman with an idea who dreams of starting her own business—if she just had a network, if she just had the capital—America wants to be her partner, because we believe in the entrepreneur that you can be, the innovations you can spark, and the jobs you can create. And when you succeed, we'll all be more prosperous.

To the young man who's working late in a clinic, tending to a patient, who dreams not just of treating diseases, but preventing them—"If I just had the resources, if I just had the support"—we want to be your partner, because we believe in the advocate that you can be and in the families you can reach and the lives you can save. And when you succeed, our world will be better.

To the young woman tired of the tensions in her community, who dreams of helping her neighbors see beyond differences—if she

could just start a dialogue, if she knew how others had walked the same path—well, America wants to be your partner, because we believe in the activist that you can be and the empathy that you can build and the understanding you can foster between people. And when you succeed, our world will be a little more peaceful.

And to the young man who believes his voice isn't being heard, who dreams of bringing people like him together across his country—if he just knew how to organize and mobilize them—we want to be your partner, because we believe in the leaders that you can be, in the difference you can make to ignite positive change. And when you succeed, the world will be a little more free.

So that's the future we can build together. That's the commitment America is making in the Asia-Pacific. It's a partnership not just with nations, but with people, with you, for decades to come, bound by the values we share, guided by the vision we seek. I am absolutely confident we can advance the security and the prosperity and the dignity of people across this region. And in pursuit of that future, you will have no greater friend than the United States of America.

So thank you very much. God bless Australia. God bless America. God bless our great alliance. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to John Story, chancellor, and Peter Høj, vice-chancellor, University of Queensland; musician Stefani J.A. "Lady Gaga" Germanotta; former Mayor Graeme Sawyer of Darwin, Australia; and former U.S. Ambassador to Australia Jeffrey L. Bleich. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Joint Statement—Group of Twenty Leaders' Brisbane Statement on Ebola
November 15, 2014

We are deeply concerned about the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and saddened by the suffering and loss of life it is inflicting. We are mindful of the serious humanitarian, social and economic impacts on those countries, and of the potential for these impacts to spread.

The governments and people of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are making tremendous efforts to fight the outbreak, with the support of the African Union and other African countries. We commend the brave service of health care and relief workers. We also applaud the contributions of countries worldwide, the United Nations (UN) and its bodies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), international and regional organisations and financial institutions, non-governmental and religious organisations, and the private sector. We fully support the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response's ongoing work to harness capacity to stop the outbreak, treat the infected, ensure essential services, preserve stability and prevent further outbreaks and urge that it act swiftly to achieve these objectives.

G20 members are committed to do what is necessary to ensure the international effort can extinguish the outbreak and address its medium-term economic and humanitarian costs. We will work through bilateral, regional and multilateral channels, and in partnership with non-governmental stakeholders. We will share our experiences of successfully fighting Ebola with our partners, including to promote safe conditions and training for health care and relief workers. We will work to expedite the effective and targeted disbursement of funds and other assistance, balancing between emergency and longer-term needs.

We invite those governments that have yet to do so to join in providing financial contributions, appropriately qualified and trained medical teams and personnel, medical and protective equipment, and medicines and treatments. While commending ongoing work, we urge greater efforts by researchers, regulators and pharmaceutical companies to develop safe,

effective and affordable diagnostic tools, vaccines and treatments. We call upon international and regional institutions, civil society and the private sector to work with governments to mitigate the impacts of the crisis and ensure the longer-term economic recovery.

In this regard, we urge the World Bank Group (WBG) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to continue their strong support for the affected countries and welcome the IMF's initiative to make available a further $300 million to stem the Ebola outbreak and ease pressures on Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, through a combination of concessional loans, debt relief, and grants. We ask the IMF and WBG to explore new, flexible mechanisms to address the economic effects of future comparable crises.

This outbreak illustrates the urgency of addressing longer-term systemic issues and gaps in capability, preparedness and response capacity that expose the global economy to the impacts of infectious disease. G20 members recommit to full implementation of the WHO's International Health Regulations (IHR). To this end, and in the context of our broader efforts to strengthen health systems globally, we commit to support others to implement the IHR and to build capacity to prevent, detect, report early and rapidly respond to infectious diseases like Ebola. We also commit to fight anti-microbial resistance. Interested G20 members are supporting this goal through initiatives to accelerate action across the Economic Community of West African States and other vulnerable regions and will report progress and announce a time frame by May 2015 at the World Health Assembly.

We invite all countries to join us in mobilizing resources to strengthen national, regional and global preparedness against the threat posed by infectious diseases to global health and strong, sustainable and balanced growth for all. We will remain vigilant and responsive.

NOTE: The joint statement was first released by Australia in its capacity as host of the Group of Twenty Leaders' Summit. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's News Conference in Brisbane, Australia
November 16, 2014

The President. Good afternoon. I want to begin by thanking Prime Minister Abbott, the people of Brisbane, and the people of Australia for being such extraordinary hosts for the G–20. All the arrangements were terrific, and, as always, the people of Australia could not have been friendlier and better organized. So I very much appreciate everything that you have done.

We had a lot of good discussions during the course of the G–20, but as our Australian friends say, this wasn't just a "good old chinwag." [*Laughter*] I really love that expression. [*Laughter*] It was a productive summit. And so I want to thank Tony for his leadership, and the people of Brizzy truly did shine throughout this process with their hospitality.

This is the final day of a trip that has taken me across the Asia-Pacific, a visit that comes against the backdrop of America's renewed economic strength. The United States is in the longest stretch of uninterrupted private sector job growth in its history. Over the last few years, we've put more people back to work than all the other advanced economies combined. And this growing economic strength at home set the stage for the progress that we have made on this trip. It's been a good week for American leadership and for American workers.

We made important progress in our efforts to open markets to U.S. goods and to boost the exports that support American jobs. And we continue to make progress toward the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Our agreement with China to extend visas for businesspeople, tourists, and students is going to boost tourism, grow our two economies, and create jobs for Americans and Chinese alike. We also agreed with China to pursue a bilateral investment treaty, as well

as agreeing on an approach to the Information Technology Agreement that is estimated would support some 60,000 American jobs. And here at the G–20, China committed to greater transparency on its economic data, including its foreign exchange reserves. And this is a step toward the market-driven exchange rate that we've been pushing for because it would promote a level playing field for American businesses and American workers.

Here in Brisbane, all the G–20 countries announced strategies to increase growth and put people back to work, including a new initiative to support jobs by building infrastructure. Our nations made commitments that could bring another hundred million women into our collective workforce. We took new steps toward strengthening our banks, closing tax loopholes for multinational companies, and stopping tax evaders and criminals from hiding behind shell companies. And these were all very specific provisions. These were not just goals that were set without any substance behind them. We have made very concrete progress during the course of the last several G–20 sessions in preventing companies from avoiding the taxes that they owe in their home countries, including the United States, and making sure that we've got a financial system that's more stable and that can allow a bank to fail without taxpayers having to bail them out.

Meanwhile, the breakthrough the United States achieved with India this week allows for a resumption of talks on a global trade deal that would mean more growth and prosperity for all of us.

This week, we also took historic steps in the fight against climate change. The ambitious new goal that I announced in Beijing will double the pace at which America reduces its carbon pollution while growing our economy and creating jobs, strengthening our energy security, and putting us on the path to a low-carbon future. Combined with China's commitment—China for the first time committed to slowing and then peaking and then reversing the course of its emissions—we're showing that there's no excuse for other nations to come together, both developed and developing, to achieve a strong global climate agreement next year.

The $3 billion contribution to the Green Climate Fund that I announced yesterday will help developing nations deal with climate change, reduce their carbon pollution, and invest in clean energy. I want to commend, by the way, Prime Minister Abe and Japan for their $1.5 billion pledge to the fund. And following the steps we've taken in the United States, many of the G–20 countries agreed to work to improve the efficiency of heavy-duty vehicles, which would be another major step in reducing emissions.

And finally, I'm pleased that more nations are stepping up and joining the United States in the effort to end the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. Coming on the heels of our Global Health Security Agenda in the United States, the G–20 countries committed to helping nations like those in West Africa to build their capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to future outbreaks before they become epidemics.

So, from trade to climate change, to the fight against Ebola, this was a strong week for American leadership. And the results will be more jobs for the American people, historic steps towards a cleaner and healthier planet, and progress towards saving lives not just in West Africa, but eventually, in other places. If you ask me, I'd say that's a pretty good week. The American people can be proud of the progress that we've made. I intend to build on that momentum when I return home tomorrow.

And with that, I am going to take a few questions. I've got my cheat sheet here. And we're going to start with Matt Spetalnick of Reuters.

President's Interaction With President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/Ukraine/Sanctions Against Russia/Keystone XL Pipeline Project

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Some of your fellow G–20 leaders took an in-your-face approach with President Putin. You had conversations——

The President. I'm sorry, with President——

Q. With President Putin.

The President. Oh, I see. Got it.

Q. Took a kind of confrontational approach to him. You had brief discussions with him at APEC. How confrontational or not were those encounters? Did you have any further exchanges with him here? What, if any, projects—progress did you make with him on the Ukraine issue? And of course, you've now just met with EU leaders. Did you agree on further sanctions?

One other question, sir, on a domestic subject. Are you prepared to state unequivocally that if Congress does pass a Keystone pipeline bill, that you would veto it if it comes to your desk?

The President. I had naturally several interactions with President Putin during the course of the APEC summit and then here at the G–20. I would characterize them as typical of our interactions, which are businesslike and blunt. And my communications to him was no different than what I've said publicly as well as what I've said to him privately over the course of this crisis in Ukraine, and that is, Russia has the opportunity to take a different path, to resolve the issue of Ukraine in a way that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and is consistent with international law. That is our preference, and if it does so, then I will be the first to suggest that we roll back the sanctions that are frankly having a devastating effect on the Russian economy.

If he continues down the path that he is on—violating international law, providing heavy arms to the separatists in Ukraine, violating an agreement that he agreed to just a few weeks ago, the Minsk agreement, that would have lowered the temperature and the killing in the disputed areas and make providing us a pathway for a diplomatic resolution—then the isolation that Russia is currently experiencing will continue.

And in my meeting with European leaders, they confirmed their view that so far, Russia has not abided by either the spirit or the letter of the agreement that Mr. Putin signed—or agreed to, and that as a consequence, we are going to continue to maintain the economic isolation while maintaining the possibility of a diplomatic solution.

It is not our preference to see Russia isolated the way it is. We would prefer a Russia that is fully integrated with the global economy, that is thriving on behalf of its people, that can once again engage with us in cooperative efforts around global challenges. But we're also very firm on the need to uphold core international principles. And one of those principles is, is that you don't invade other countries or finance proxies and support them in ways that break up a country that has mechanisms for democratic elections.

Q. Did you discuss or agree with them on further sanctions?

The President. The—at this point, the sanctions that we have in place are biting plenty good. We retain the capabilities, and we have our teams constantly looking at mechanisms in which to turn up additional pressure as necessary.

With respect to Keystone, I've said consistently—and I think I repeated in Burma, but I guess I've got to answer it one more time—we're going to let the process play itself out. And the determination will be made in the first instance by the Secretary of State. But I won't hide my opinion about this, which is that one major determinant of whether we should approve a pipeline shipping Canadian oil to world markets, not to the United States, is, does it contribute to the greenhouse gases that are causing climate change?

Q. But with your comments on the pipeline here and in Burma, have you——

The President. Matt, I've got to move on, man. Everybody wants to go home. All right? Other people have questions. Jim Acosta, CNN.

U.S.-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change/President's Exercise of Executive Authority/Immigration Reform/U.S. Strategy To Combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to ask you about the climate deal that you agreed to with Chinese President Xi, and on that

front, but also adding in your expected executive action on immigration, that you're taking executive actions on a multitude of fronts. And I wanted to ask you, sir, what is stopping a future Republican President, or even a Democratic President, from reversing your Executive orders? And are you expanding the powers of the Presidency in ways that could potentially backfire on your agenda down the road?

And on the battle against ISIS, your Joint Chiefs Chairman, Martin Dempsey, is in Iraq right now, but at a congressional hearing last week, he said he could envision a scenario in which ground forces could be engaged in combat in Iraq alongside Iraqi security forces. I know you've ruled out the possibility of having ground forces—U.S. ground forces engaged in combat going house to house and so forth. Has your thinking on that changed somewhat, and might General Dempsey be able to convince you otherwise?

The President. Okay. With respect to the climate agreement, the goal that we've set—a 26- to 28-percent reduction by 2025—we shaped that target based on existing authorities rather than the need for additional congressional action.

And I want to be clear here, Jim, that that's based not on particular executive actions that I'm taking, but based on the authority that's been upheld repeatedly by this Supreme Court for the EPA, the Environmental Protection Agency, to be able to shape rules to regulate the emission of greenhouse gases.

Obviously, it's supplemented by a bunch of stuff that we're doing that nobody suggests isn't within our authority. For example, the doubling of fuel efficiency standards on cars is something that we negotiated with the car companies and with labor groups and is working really well, and we're selling a lot of American cars domestically as well as internationally. And they are more fuel-efficient cars and, as a consequence, more popular cars.

With respect to executive actions generally, the record will show that I have actually taken fewer executive actions than my predecessors. Nobody disputes that. What I think has changed is the reaction of some of my friends in Congress to exercising what are normal and, frankly, fairly typical exercises of Presidential authority.

You are absolutely right that the very nature of an executive action means that a future President could reverse those actions. But that's always been true. That was true when I came into office; if President Bush had a bunch of executive actions that he had signed, it was part of my authority to reverse them. That's why, for example, on immigration reform it continues to be my great preference to see Congress pass comprehensive legislation, because that is not reversed by a future President, it would have to be reversed by a future Congress. That's part of the reason why I've argued consistently that we're better off if we can get a comprehensive deal through Congress. That's why I showed extraordinary patience with Congress in trying to work a bipartisan deal. That's why I was so encouraged when the Senate produced a bipartisan immigration deal and why I waited for over a year for Speaker Boehner to call that bipartisan bill in the House.

But as I've said before, I can't wait in perpetuity when I have authorities that, at least for the next 2 years, can improve the system, can allow us to shift more resources to the border rather than separating families, improve the legal immigration system. I would be derelict in my duties if I did not try to improve a system that everybody acknowledges is broken.

And with respect to Syria, Chairman Dempsey, I think, has consistently said in all his testimony, and I would expect him to always do this, to give me his best military advice and to not be constrained by politics. And he has not advised me that I should be sending U.S. troops to fight. What he said in testimony, and what I suspect he'll always say, is that, yes, there are circumstances in which he could envision the deployment of U.S. troops. That's true everywhere, by the way. That's his job, is to think about various contingencies. And yes, there are always circumstances in which the United States might need to deploy U.S. ground troops.

If we discovered that ISIL had gotten possession of a nuclear weapon, and we had to run an operation to get it out of their hands, then, yes, you can anticipate that not only would Chairman Dempsey recommend me sending U.S. ground troops to get that weapon out of their hands, but I would order it. So the question just ends up being, what are those circumstances? I'm not going speculate on those. Right now we're moving forward in conjunction with outstanding allies like Australia in training Iraqi security forces to do their job on the ground.

Q. But in the current scenario, your thinking on that has not changed?

The President. My thinking has not changed currently.

Ed Henry of Fox.

Q. Thank you. One question, I promise.

The President. That's great. [*Laughter*]

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Professor of Economics Jonathan Gruber/Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Q. At your Burma town hall a couple days ago you tried to inspire young leaders by saying governments need to be held accountable and be responsive to the people. I wonder how you square that with your former adviser, Jonathan Gruber, claiming you were not transparent about the health law? Because in his words, the American people, the voters, are stupid. Did you mislead Americans about the taxes, about keeping your plan, in order to get the bill passed?

The President. No, I did not. I just heard about this. I get well briefed before I come out here. The fact that some adviser who never worked on our staff expressed an opinion that I completely disagree with in terms of the voters, is no reflection on the actual process that was run.

We had a year-long debate, Ed. I mean, go back and look at your stories. The one thing we can't say is that we did not have a lengthy debate about health care in the United States of America or that it was not adequately covered. I mean, I would just advise all of—every press outlet here: Go back and pull up every clip, every story, and I think it will—it's fair to say that there was not a provision in the health care law that was not extensively debated and was fully transparent.

Now, there were folks who disagreed with some of these various positions. It was a tough debate. But the good news is—and I know this wasn't part of your question—but since some folks back home who don't have health insurance may be watching, open enrollment just started, which means that those who did not take advantage of the marketplaces the first time around, they've got another chance to sign up for affordable health care; they may be eligible for a tax credit.

So far, there were over half a million successful logins on the first day. Healthcare.gov works really well now; 1.2 million people used the window-shopping function since Sunday. There were 23,000 applications completed in just the first 8 hours and tens of thousands more throughout the day.

Health care is working. More than 10 million people have already gotten health insurance; millions more are eligible. And contrary to some of the predictions of the naysayers, not only is the program working, but we've actually seen health care inflation lower than it's been in 50 years, which is contributing to us reducing the deficit and has the effect of making premiums for families lower that they otherwise would have been if they have health insurance.

All right? Kristen Welker [NBC News].

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) Terrorist Organization/Syria

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to ask you again about Syria. When you were recently asked about the U.S. campaign against ISIS, you said, "It's too early to say whether we are winning." You went on to say, "This is going to be a long-term plan." There are now reports that you have ordered a review of your entire Syria policy. So I'd like to put the question to you today: Are you currently recalibrating your policy in Syria? And does that include plans to remove President Bashar al-Asad? And was it a

miscalculation not to focus on the removal of Asad initially? Thank you.

The President. We have a weekly meeting with my CENTCOM Commander, with my Joint—the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, with all our diplomatic personnel related to the region, as well as my national security team and Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense, intelligence teams, to assess what kind of progress are we making both in Iraq and in Syria with respect to ISIL. And I will be having weekly meetings as long as this campaign lasts, because I think it's very important for us to get it right.

We have not had a comprehensive review of Syria. We've had a comprehensive review of what are we doing each and every week, what's working, what's not. Some of it is very detailed at the tactical level. Some of it is conceptual. We continue to learn about ISIL: where its weaknesses are, how we can more effectively put pressure on them. And so nothing extraordinary, nothing formal of the sort that you describe has taken place.

Certainly, no changes have taken place with respect to our attitude towards Bashar al-Asad. And I've said this before, but let me reiterate: Asad has ruthlessly murdered hundreds of thousands of his citizens and, as a consequence, has completely lost legitimacy with the majority of the country. For us to then make common cause with him against ISIL would only turn more Sunnis in Syria in the direction of supporting ISIL and would weaken our coalition that sends a message around the region, this is not against—a fight against Sunni Islam, this is a fight against extremists of any stripe who are willing to behead innocent people or kill children or mow down political prisoners with the kind of wanton cruelty that I think we've very rarely seen in the modern age.

And so we have communicated to the Syrian regime that when we operate going after ISIL in their airspace, that they would be well advised not to take us on. But beyond that, there's no expectation that we are going to in some ways enter an alliance with Asad. He is not credible in that country.

Q. But are you——

The President. Now, we are looking for a political solution eventually within Syria that is inclusive of all the groups who live there: the Alawite, the Sunni, Christians. And at some point, the people of Syria and the various players involved, as well as the regional players—Turkey, Iran, Asad's patrons like Russia—are going to have to engage in a political conversation.

And it's the nature of diplomacy in any time, certainly in this situation, where you end up having diplomatic conversations potentially with people that you don't like and regimes that you don't like. But we're not even close to being at that stage yet.

Q. But just to put a fine point on it, are you actively discussing ways to remove him as a part of that political transition?

The President. No.

Major Garrett [CBS News].

Potential Federal Government Shutdown/Immigration Reform/Bipartisanship

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. As you well know, the continuing resolution expires on December 11. Many things you've talked about on this trip are related to that: funding for coalition operations in Iraq and Syria, the Ebola outbreak, not to mention day-to-day Government operations. What are the odds the country will see itself in a shutdown scenario? How much do you fear the Government will shut down? And to what degree does your anxiety about this or your team's anxiety about this influence the timing of your decision on immigration and executive action?

The President. I take Mitch McConnell at his word when he says that the Government is not going to shut down. There is no reason for it to shut down. We traveled down that path before. It was bad for the country, it was bad for every elected official in Washington. And at the end of the day, it was resolved in the same way that it would have been resolved if we hadn't shut the Government down. So that's not going to be productive, and I think that Leader McConnell and Speaker Boehner understand that.

But this goes to a broader point that I've made previously and I'll just reiterate: It is in the nature of democracy that the parties are going to disagree on certain issues. And in our system, because we don't have a parliamentary system, it means that you can have a Congress of one party and a President of another, and they disagree on some really fundamental issues. And the question then is, how do you deal with that? Well, the sensible way to deal with it is to say here are the issues we don't agree on, and we'll fight like heck for our position, and then, we'll work together on the issues that we do agree on. And that's how it's always been; that's how it was with Ronald Reagan when he was dealing with a Democratic Congress. There was no—at no point did the Democrats say, well, because we don't agree with Ronald Reagan on XYZ issue, then we can't work with him on Social Security reform or tax reform or other issues. He said, okay, we'll fight on that, we'll join together on that, and as a consequence, the country will make progress.

And I would expect that same attitude in this instance. I understand that there are members of the Republican Party who deeply disagree with me and law enforcement and the evangelical community and a number of their own Republican colleagues about the need for immigration reform. I get that. And they've made their views clear, and there's nothing wrong with them arguing their position and opposing legislation. But why they would then decide we're going to shut down the Government makes about as much sense as my decision to shut down the Government if they decide to take a vote to repeal health care reform for the—is it 53d or 55th time? I mean, I understand that there's a difference there, but let's keep on doing the people's business.

Q. Does the shutdown anxiety in any way affect your timing at all on immigration action?

The President. No, I think the main concern I have is making sure that we get it right, and that's what we're focused on at this point, because any executive action that I take is going to require some adjustments to how DHS, the Department of Homeland Security, operates, where it's deploying resources, et cetera; how are folks processed; what priorities are set up. And so I want to make sure that we've crossed all our t's and dotted all our i's—that that's my main priority.

And we are going to close with Jim Avila [ABC News].

Immigration Reform

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Following up on immigration, in 2010, when asked by immigration reform advocates to stop deportations and act alone on providing legal status for the undocumented, you said: "I'm President, I'm not king. I can't do these things just by myself."

The President. Right.

Q. In 2013, you said: "I'm not the emperor of the United States. My job is to execute laws that are passed." Mr. President, what has changed since then? And since you've now had a chance to talk since July with your legal advisers, what do you now believe are your limits so that you can continue to be—act as President and not as emperor or king?

The President. Well, the—actually, my position hasn't changed. When I was talking to the advocates, their interest was in me, through executive action, duplicating the legislation that was stalled in Congress. And getting a comprehensive deal of the sort that is in the Senate legislation, for example, does extend beyond my legal authorities. There are certain things I cannot do. There are certain limits to what falls within the realm of prosecutorial discretion in terms of how we apply existing immigration laws.

And what we've continued to do is to talk to Office of Legal Counsel that's responsible for telling us what the rules are, what the scope of our operations are, and determining where it is appropriate for us to say we're not going to deport 11 million people. On the other hand, we've got severe resource constraints right now at the border not in apprehending people, but in processing and having enough immigration judges and so forth. And so what's within our authority to do in reallocating resources and reprioritizing since we can't do everything. And it's on that basis that I'll be making a deci-

sion about any executive actions that I might take.

I will repeat what I have said before: There is a very simple solution to this perception that somehow I'm exercising too much executive authority. Pass a bill I can sign on this issue. If Congress passes a law that solves our border problems, improves our legal immigration system, and provides a pathway for the 11 million people who are here, working in our kitchens, working in farms, making beds in hotels—everybody knows they're there; we're not going to deport all of them; we'd like to see them being able, out in the open, to pay their taxes, pay a penalty, get right with the law—give me a bill that addresses those issues, I'll be the first one to sign it, and metaphorically, I'll crumple up whatever executive actions that we take and we'll toss them in the wastebasket, because we will now have a law that addresses these issues.

Q. But in those 5 months, sir, since you have said you were going to act, have you received the legal advice from the Attorney General about what limits you have——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——and what you can do?

The President. Yes.

Q. And would you tell us what those are?

The President. No. [*Laughter*] I will tell them when I make the announcement. But it was—it's a good try though. That was a good angle. [*Laughter*] Jim and I go way back, although he actually—he was famous, I was not. He used to be a broadcaster in Chicago, so I used to watch him on TV. You've aged a little better than I have. [*Laughter*] Yes.

All right. People of Australia, thank you again for your wonderful hospitality.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:19 p.m. at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre. In his remarks, the President referred to Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command.

Statement on the Death of Abdul-Rahman Kassig
November 16, 2014

Today we offer our prayers and condolences to the parents and family of Abdul-Rahman Kassig, also known to us as Peter. We cannot begin to imagine their anguish at this painful time.

Abdul-Rahman was taken from us in an act of pure evil by a terrorist group that the world rightly associates with inhumanity. Like Jim Foley and Steven Sotloff before him, his life and deeds stand in stark contrast to everything that ISIL represents. While ISIL revels in the slaughter of innocents, including Muslims, and is bent only on sowing death and destruction, Abdul-Rahman was a humanitarian who worked to save the lives of Syrians injured and dispossessed by the Syrian conflict. While ISIL exploits the tragedy in Syria to advance their own selfish aims, Abdul-Rahman was so moved by the anguish and suffering of Syrian civilians that he traveled to Lebanon to work in a hospital treating refugees. Later, he established an aid group, SERA, to provide assistance to Syrian refugees and displaced persons in Lebanon and Syria. These were the selfless acts of an individual who cared deeply about the plight of the Syrian people.

ISIL's actions represent no faith, least of all the Muslim faith, which Abdul-Rahman adopted as his own. Today we grieve together, yet we also recall that the indomitable spirit of goodness and perseverance that burned so brightly in Abdul-Rahman Kassig, and which binds humanity together, ultimately is the light that will prevail over the darkness of ISIL.

NOTE: The statement referred to Edward and Paula Kassig, adoptive parents of Mr. Kassig; Rhonda Schwindt, his biological mother; and James W. Foley and Steven Sotloff, freelance journalists who were killed by members of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization on August 19 and September 2, respectively.

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan Announcing Pledges to the Green Climate Fund
November 16, 2014

Making good on our commitment to support efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resilience worldwide, the United States and Japan announced a total of up to $4.5 billion in pledges to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). This includes up to $3 billion from the United States and up to $1.5 billion from Japan, subject to respective domestic procedures and based on strong contributions from other donors. Our pledges build on those already announced by Germany, France, and other donors, which include developed and developing countries.

Our pledges will be reiterated at the GCF's pledging session on November 20 in Berlin, Germany, where additional countries are expected to announce pledges. By announcing significant pledges promptly and at the leader level, we aim to provide great momentum to the ongoing climate change negotiations toward a post-2020 agreement that is applicable to all, in which countries make ambitious and transparent commitments to reduce their emissions.

Today's announcement builds on a history of collective leadership by the United States, Japan, and other countries to support resilient and low-carbon development around the world. In 2008, our countries jointly spearheaded the establishment of the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs). Our pledges to the GCF are a continuation of that spirit of leadership. The GCF will mobilize investment from the private sector, whose resources and expertise will be essential to meet the climate challenge.

We encourage all countries that are able to join us in pledging to the GCF. We will continue working with our partners on the GCF Board and other stakeholders to make the GCF fully operational and ensure that it is an efficient and effective channel for climate finance.

NOTE: The joint statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 15, but due to the 15-hour time difference between Washington, DC, and Brisbane, Australia, where President Obama and Prime Minister Abe met, the joint statement carries a release date of November 16. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
November 16, 2014

We, the Leaders of the United States and the European Union, and the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain meeting in the margin of the G–20 Summit reaffirm our commitment to comprehensive and ambitious negotiations, in a spirit of mutual benefit, leading to a high standard Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement.

We remain committed, as we were when we launched these negotiations in June 2013, to build upon the strong foundation of our six decades of economic partnership to promote stronger, sustainable and balanced growth, to support the creation of more jobs on both sides of the Atlantic and to increase our international competitiveness.

Underlining the strategic importance of this agreement, we see it as an opportunity to promote the principles and values that we, as citizens of open economies and societies, share and cherish, including transparency and joint approaches to global trade challenges.

We commend the work of the negotiators over the last 16 months, and direct them to make all possible progress over the coming year.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement—Group of Twenty Leaders' Communiqué
November 16, 2014

1. Raising global growth to deliver better living standards and quality jobs for people across the world is our highest priority. We welcome stronger growth in some key economies. But the global recovery is slow, uneven and not delivering the jobs needed. The global economy is being held back by a shortfall in demand, while addressing supply constraints is key to lifting potential growth. Risks persist, including in financial markets and from geopolitical tensions. We commit to work in partnership to lift growth, boost economic resilience and strengthen global institutions.

2. We are determined to overcome these challenges and step up our efforts to achieve strong, sustainable and balanced growth, and to create jobs. We are implementing structural reforms to lift growth and private sector activity, recognising that well-functioning markets underpin prosperity. We will ensure our macroeconomic policies are appropriate to support growth, strengthen demand and promote global rebalancing. We will continue to implement fiscal strategies flexibly, taking into account near-term economic conditions, while putting debt as a share of GDP on a sustainable path. Our monetary authorities have committed to support the recovery and address deflationary pressures when needed, consistent with their mandates. We will be mindful of the global impacts of our policies and cooperate to manage spillovers. We stand ready to use all policy levers to underpin confidence and the recovery.

3. This year we set an ambitious goal to lift the G20's GDP by at least an additional two per cent by 2018. Analysis by the IMF–OECD indicates that our commitments, if fully implemented, will deliver 2.1 per cent. This will add more than US$2 trillion to the global economy and create millions of jobs. Our measures to lift investment, increase trade and competition, and boost employment, along with our macroeconomic policies, will support development and inclusive growth, and help to reduce inequality and poverty.

4. Our actions to boost growth and create quality jobs are set out in the Brisbane Action Plan and in our comprehensive growth strategies. We will monitor and hold each other to account for implementing our commitments, and actual progress towards our growth ambition, informed by analysis from international organisations. We will ensure our growth strategies continue to deliver and will review progress at our next meeting.

Acting together to lift growth and create jobs

5. Tackling global investment and infrastructure shortfalls is crucial to lifting growth, job creation and productivity. We endorse the Global Infrastructure Initiative, a multi-year work programme to lift quality public and private infrastructure investment. Our growth strategies contain major investment initiatives, including actions to strengthen public investment and improve our domestic investment and financing climate, which is essential to attract new private sector finance for investment. We have agreed on a set of voluntary leading practices to promote and prioritise quality investment, particularly in infrastructure. To help match investors with projects, we will address data gaps and improve information on project pipelines. We are working to facilitate long-term financing from institutional investors and to encourage market sources of finance, including transparent securitisation, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises. We will continue to work with multilateral development banks, and encourage national development banks, to optimise use of their balance sheets to provide additional lending and ensure our work on infrastructure benefits low-income countries.

6. To support implementation of the Initiative, we agree to establish a Global Infrastructure Hub with a four-year mandate. The Hub will contribute to developing a knowledge-sharing platform and network between governments, the private sector, development banks

and other international organisations. The Hub will foster collaboration among these groups to improve the functioning and financing of infrastructure markets.

7. To strengthen infrastructure and attract more private sector investment in developing countries, we welcome the launch of the World Bank Group's Global Infrastructure Facility, which will complement our work. We support similar initiatives by other development banks and continued cooperation amongst them.

8. Trade and competition are powerful drivers of growth, increased living standards and job creation. In today's world we don't just trade final products. We work together to make things by importing and exporting components and services. We need policies that take full advantage of global value chains and encourage greater participation and value addition by developing countries. Our growth strategies include reforms to facilitate trade by lowering costs, streamlining customs procedures, reducing regulatory burdens and strengthening trade-enabling services. We are promoting competition, entrepreneurship and innovation, including by lowering barriers to new business entrants and investment. We reaffirm our longstanding standstill and rollback commitments to resist protectionism.

9. Our actions to increase investment, trade and competition will deliver quality jobs. But we must do more to address unemployment, raise participation and create quality jobs. We agree to the goal of reducing the gap in participation rates between men and women in our countries by 25 per cent by 2025, taking into account national circumstances, to bring more than 100 million women into the labour force, significantly increase global growth and reduce poverty and inequality.

10. We are strongly committed to reducing youth unemployment, which is unacceptably high, by acting to ensure young people are in education, training or employment. Our Employment Plans include investments in apprenticeships, education and training, and incentives for hiring young people and encouraging entrepreneurship. We remain focussed on addressing informality, as well as structural and long-term unemployment, by strengthening labour markets and having appropriate social protection systems. Improving workplace safety and health is a priority. We ask our labour and employment ministers, supported by an Employment Working Group, to report to us in 2015.

11. We are committed to poverty eradication and development, and to ensure our actions contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth in low-income and developing countries. We commit to take strong practical measures to reduce the global average cost of transferring remittances to five per cent and to enhance financial inclusion as a priority. The G20 Food Security and Nutrition Framework will strengthen growth by lifting investment in food systems, raising productivity to expand food supply, and increasing incomes and quality jobs. We support efforts in the United Nations to agree an ambitious post-2015 development agenda. The G20 will contribute by strengthening economic growth and resilience.

Building a stronger, more resilient global economy

12. Strengthening the resilience of the global economy and stability of the financial system are crucial to sustaining growth and development. We have delivered key aspects of the core commitments we made in response to the financial crisis. Our reforms to improve banks' capital and liquidity positions and to make derivatives markets safer will reduce risks in the financial system. We welcome the Financial Stability Board (FSB) proposal as set out in the Annex requiring global systemically important banks to hold additional loss absorbing capacity that would further protect taxpayers if these banks fail. Progress has been made in delivering the shadow banking framework and we endorse an updated roadmap for further work. We have agreed to measures to dampen risk channels between banks and non-banks. But critical work remains to build a stronger, more resilient financial system. The task now is to finalise remaining elements of our policy framework and fully implement agreed financial reg-

ulatory reforms, while remaining alert to new risks. We call on regulatory authorities to make further concrete progress in swiftly implementing the agreed G20 derivatives reforms. We encourage jurisdictions to defer to each other when it is justified, in line with the St Petersburg Declaration. We welcome the FSB's plans to report on the implementation and effects of these reforms, and the FSB's future priorities. We welcome the progress made to strengthen the orderliness and predictability of the sovereign debt restructuring process.

13. We are taking actions to ensure the fairness of the international tax system and to secure countries' revenue bases. Profits should be taxed where economic activities deriving the profits are performed and where value is created. We welcome the significant progress on the G20/OECD Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Action Plan to modernise international tax rules. We are committed to finalising this work in 2015, including transparency of taxpayer-specific rulings found to constitute harmful tax practices. We welcome progress being made on taxation of patent boxes. To prevent cross-border tax evasion, we endorse the global Common Reporting Standard for the automatic exchange of tax information (AEOI) on a reciprocal basis. We will begin to exchange information automatically with each other and with other countries by 2017 or end-2018, subject to completing necessary legislative procedures. We welcome financial centres' commitments to do the same and call on all to join us. We welcome deeper engagement of developing countries in the BEPS project to address their concerns. We will work with them to build their tax administration capacity and implement AEOI. We welcome further collaboration by our tax authorities on cross-border compliance activities.

14. We endorse the 2015–6 G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan that will support growth and resilience. Our actions are building cooperation and networks, including to enhance mutual legal assistance, recovery of the proceeds of corruption and denial of safe haven to corrupt officials. We commit to improve the transparency of the public and private sectors, and of beneficial ownership by implementing the G20 High-Level Principles on Beneficial Ownership Transparency.

Strengthening global institutions

15. The G20 must be at the forefront in helping to address key global economic challenges. Global economic institutions need to be effective and representative, and to reflect the changing world economy. We welcome the increased representation of emerging economies on the FSB and other actions to maintain its effectiveness. We are committed to maintaining a strong, quota-based and adequately resourced International Monetary Fund (IMF). We reaffirm our commitment in St Petersburg and in this light we are deeply disappointed with the continued delay in progressing the IMF quota and governance reforms agreed in 2010 and the 15th General Review of Quotas, including a new quota formula. The implementation of the 2010 reforms remains our highest priority for the IMF and we urge the United States to ratify them. If this does not happen by year-end, we ask the IMF to build on its existing work and stand ready with options for next steps.

16. We need a strong trading system in an open global economy to drive growth and generate jobs. To help business make best use of trade agreements, we will work to ensure our bilateral, regional and plurilateral agreements complement one another, are transparent and contribute to a stronger multilateral trading system under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. These rules remain the backbone of the global trading system that has delivered economic prosperity. A robust and effective WTO that responds to current and future challenges is essential. We welcome the breakthrough between the United States and India that will help the full and prompt implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement and includes provisions on food security. We commit to implement all elements of the Bali package and to swiftly define a WTO work programme on the remaining issues of the Doha Development Agenda to get negotiations back on track. This will be important to restore trust

and confidence in the multilateral trading system. We agreed to discuss ways to make the system work better when we meet next year. We will continue to provide aid-for-trade to developing countries in need of assistance.

17. Increased collaboration on energy is a priority. Global energy markets are undergoing significant transformation. Strong and resilient energy markets are critical to economic growth. Today we endorse the G20 Principles on Energy Collaboration. We ask our energy ministers to meet and report to us in 2015 on options to take this work forward. Gas is an increasingly important energy source and we will work to improve the functioning of gas markets.

18. Improving energy efficiency is a cost-effective way to help address the rising demands of sustainable growth and development, as well as energy access and security. It reduces costs for businesses and households. We have agreed an Action Plan for Voluntary Collaboration on Energy Efficiency, including new work on the efficiency and emissions performance of vehicles, particularly heavy duty vehicles; networked devices; buildings; industrial processes; and electricity generation; as well as work on financing for energy efficiency. We reaffirm our commitment to rationalise and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption, recognising the need to support the poor.

19. We support strong and effective action to address climate change. Consistent with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its agreed outcomes, our actions will support sustainable development, economic growth, and certainty for business and investment. We will work together to adopt successfully a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the UNFCCC that is applicable to all parties at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris in 2015. We encourage parties that are ready to communicate their intended nationally determined contributions well in advance of COP21 (by the first quarter of 2015 for those parties ready to do so). We reaffirm our support for mobilising finance for adaptation and mitigation, such as the Green Climate Fund.

20. We are deeply concerned with the humanitarian and economic impact of the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. We support the urgent coordinated international response and have committed to do all we can to contain and respond to this crisis. We call on international financial institutions to assist affected countries in dealing with the economic impacts of this and other humanitarian crises, including in the Middle East.

21. We remain resolute in our commitment to lift economic growth, support job creation, promote development and build global confidence. We thank Australia for its leadership this year. We look forward to working together in 2015 under Turkey's presidency and to discussing progress at our next meeting in Antalya on 15–16 November 2015. We also look forward to meeting in China in 2016.

Annex

Agreed documents

The following documents agreed by the G20 support our communiqué:

- Brisbane Action Plan, November 2014
- G20 Note on the Global Infrastructure Initiative and Hub, November 2014
- 2014 Financial Inclusion Action Plan, November 2014
- G20 Plan to Facilitate Remittance Flows, November 2014
- G20 Food Security and Nutrition Framework, November 2014
- Development Working Group Accountability Framework, November 2014
- 2015–16 G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan, November 2014
- G20 High-Level Principles on Beneficial Ownership Transparency, November 2014
- G20 Principles on Energy Collaboration, November 2014

- G20 Energy Efficiency Action Plan, November 2014
- The 2015 G20 Accountability Assessment Process, November 2014
- 2014 Accountability Assessment Report, November 2014

Ministerial statements

- Communiqué, Meeting of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, Cairns, 20–21 September 2014
- G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration, Melbourne, 10–11 September 2014, including G20 Statement on Safer and Healthier Workplaces
- Chairman's Summary, Meeting of G20 Trade Ministers, Sydney, 29 July 2014
- Communiqué, Meeting of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, Washington DC, 10–11 April 2014
- Communiqué, Meeting of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, Sydney, 22–23 February 2014

Supporting documents

We welcome the delivery of the following documents:

- G20 Members' Comprehensive Growth Strategies, November 2014
- G20 Members' Country Employment Plans, November 2014
- IMF Surveillance Note, November 2014
- Quantifying the Impact of G–20 Members' Growth Strategies, OECD/IMF report, November 2014
- Growth Strategies: G20 Emerging Market Economies—World Bank Group Assessment, November 2014
- Global Infrastructure Facility: Update for G20 Leaders, World Bank Group, November 2014
- G20/OECD Report on Effective Approaches to Support Implementation of the G20/OECD High-Level Principles on Long-Term Investment Financing by Institutional Investors, and Annex, November 2014
- Report on G20 Trade and Investment Measures, WTO, OECD, and UNCTAD, November 2014
- G20 Labour Markets: Outlook, Key Challenges and Policy Responses, OECD, ILO and World Bank Group, November 2014
- Opportunities for Economic Growth and Job Creation in Relation to Food Security and Nutrition, FAO and OECD (with inputs from ADB, IFAD, ILO, IFPRI and WTO), September 2014
- Financial Reforms: Completing the Job and Looking Ahead, Financial Stability Board Chairman's Letter to G20 Leaders, November 2014
- Adequacy of loss-absorbing capacity of global systemically important banks in resolution, Financial Stability Board, November, 2014
- Cross-Border Recognition of Resolution Action, Financial Stability Board, September 2014
- Updated G20 Roadmap towards Strengthened Oversight and Regulation of Shadow Banking in 2015, Financial Stability Board, November 2014
- Report to the G20 Brisbane Summit on the FSB's review of the structure of its representation, Financial Stability Board, November 2014
- OECD Secretary-General's Report to G20 Leaders on Tax Matters, November 2014
- International Organisations' proposal for structured dialogue process with developing countries on tax matters, November 2014

These documents are in addition to those delivered to G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, Labour and Employment Ministers, and Trade Ministers at their meetings this year.

G20 Working Group reports

- G20 2014 Brisbane Anti-Corruption Update
- 2014 Brisbane Development Update
- G20 Energy Sustainability Working Group 2014 Co-chairs' Report
- G20 Climate Finance Study Group—Report to Ministers, 2014

Issues for further action

- The FSB proposal for an internationally agreed standard requiring global systemically important banks (G–SIBs) to hold additional loss absorbing capacity in resolution will be subject to public consultation, a rigorous quantitative impact assessment and further refinement before any final measure is agreed by the 2015 Summit. The impact analyses will include consideration of the consequences of this requirement on banks in emerging markets, G–SIBs headquartered in EMEs, and state-owned banks.
- Given the challenges litigation poses and in order to strengthen the orderliness and predictability of the sovereign debt restructuring process, we welcome the international work on strengthened collective action and pari passu clauses. We call for their inclusion in international sovereign bonds and encourage the international community and private sector to actively promote their use. We ask our Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to discuss the progress achieved on this and related issues.
- If the US does not ratify the 2010 IMF reforms by end-2014, we ask the IMF to discuss options for next steps shortly thereafter and we ask our Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to work with the IMFC to schedule a discussion on these options in their next meeting.

Acknowledgements

We thank international organisations, including the IMF, OECD, World Bank Group, WTO, ILO, FSB and UN, for their reports and recommendations, which have provided valuable inputs to G20 discussions. These can be found at http://www.g20.org/official_resources. We thank the Business 20, Civil Society 20, Labour 20, Think 20 and Youth 20 for their important contribution to the G20's work.

NOTE: The joint statement was first released by Australia in its capacity as host of the Group of Twenty Leaders' Summit. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Senior Advisers To Discuss Ebola Preparedness and Containment Efforts
November 18, 2014

Terrorist Attack in Jerusalem

Well, I've got my team here to talk about Ebola. But before I do, I want to just make mention of the horrific attacks that took place in Jerusalem.

We know that two attackers senselessly and brutally attacked innocent worshippers in a synagogue during their morning prayers. Obviously, we condemn in the strongest terms these attacks. A number of people were wounded, and four people were killed, including three American citizens. So this is a tragedy for both nations, Israel as well as the United States. And our hearts go out to the families who obviously are undergoing enormous grief right now.

Secretary Kerry has spoken to Prime Minister Netanyahu. President Abbas has strongly condemned the attacks. Tragically, this is not the first loss of life that we have seen in recent months. Too many Israelis have died. Too many Palestinians have died. And at this difficult time, I think it's important for both Palestinians and Israelis to try to work together to lower tensions and to reject violence.

The murderers for today's outrageous acts represent the kind of extremism that threatens to bring all of the Middle East into the kind of spiral from which it's very difficult to emerge. And we know how this violence can get worse over time. But we have to remind ourselves that the majority of Palestinians and Israelis overwhelmingly want peace and to be able to raise their families, knowing they're safe and secure. The United States wants to work with all parties involved to make that a reality and to isolate the kinds of extremists that are bringing about this terrible carnage.

Ebola

I now want to turn to the topic of this meeting, the Ebola situation. Obviously, some of the attention on the crisis has ebbed over the last several weeks, but the challenges remain. We have seen most recently Dr. Martin Salia, a surgeon who contracted Ebola in Sierra Leone; he was flown back to the United States, to the Nebraska facility, to try to get treated. Unfortunately, he was already in critical condition and, sadly, passed away early Monday morning. So our thoughts and prayers are with his family's.

Beyond this tragedy, though, we've established that when Ebola is promptly diagnosed and treated, then we have a great chance of curing it. Of the eight patients who were treated promptly in the United States, all eight have recovered. They are Ebola free, and they are back with their families.

And after the first incident of Ebola with—in Dallas and the unfortunate passing of Mr. Duncan, we promptly acted based on some of the lessons that were learned from Dallas. We've put in place new protocols for protective gear for our health workers. We ramped up our training and outreach for health workers. We've added screening for travelers to the United States. We're funneling all these passengers into five airports. And we put in place rules for public health workers to monitor travelers for 21 days after they arrive here.

As we saw in New York with Dr. Craig Spencer, one of the courageous health workers who has voluntarily traveled to the region to try to fight this disease, our efforts to identify, isolate, and then treat Ebola patients can work. America has proven that it can handle the isolated cases that may occur here.

But as long as the outbreak continues to rage in the three countries in West Africa—Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea—this is still going to be a danger, not just for America, but for the entire world.

We are nowhere near out of the woods yet in West Africa. The good news is, in parts of Liberia, our efforts, both civilian and military, are really paying dividends, and we are seeing the curve bending, so that we are on track—with diligence, dealing with the hotspots that may still reemerge—to actually get a handle on that disease.

We're still seeing an increase of cases in Sierra Leone, although our British counterparts are doing an excellent job working with us and the international community to coordinate the situation there. In Guinea, the numbers are lower than in Sierra Leone or Liberia, but they're often in very remote areas that are hard to reach, and some of the international coordination still needs to improve.

The bottom line, though, is that we know how to treat this disease, given that it has emerged as such a large, significant outbreak in these areas—and we recently saw some cases in Mali. It underscores how important it is to continue to push forward until we stamp out this disease entirely in that region. Until we do, there are threats of additional outbreaks. And given the nature of international travel, it means that everybody has some measure of risk.

Here at home, we've made great progress in preparing our health care system to deal with any possible threat. Our scientists continue to

make progress with vaccines and treatments, but we've got plenty of work to do.

So all of this means that, although we should feel optimistic about our capacity to solve the Ebola crisis, we cannot be complacent simply because the news attention on it has waned. We have to stay with it. And that's why I'm calling Congress to make sure that it approves before it leaves the emergency funding request that we put forward to respond to Ebola, both domestically and internationally.

The funding is going to help us strengthen our domestic health systems so that we can respond to any future cases that may arise in the United States, wherever they might happen. It's going to devote much-needed resources to sustain our efforts in West Africa. It will accelerate the testing and approval of Ebola vaccines and treatments. And it's going to help vulnerable countries to, in the future, prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of various communicable diseases before they become epidemics.

And that, ultimately, is good for our public health. The more we can catch these things early where they begin, the less risks we have over the long term. And as I've said before, in some ways, we are lucky Ebola is a very difficult disease to transmit. If we have a comparably lethal disease that is airborne, we have much bigger problems. So this gives us an opportunity to start putting in place the kind of public health detection infrastructure around the globe that is necessary should additional pandemics or epidemics or outbreaks arise.

All this makes it necessary for Congress to act. This is not a Democratic issue. It is not a Republican issue. This is a basic issue of the health and safety of the American people. And so I hope that Congress is on the case on this issue before they leave. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ghassan and Oday Abu Jamal, members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine terrorist organization who attacked worshippers at the Kehilat Bnei Torah synagogue in Jerusalem and were killed by Israeli police; Aryeh Kupinsky, Cary W. "Kalman" Levine, Mosheh Twersky, and Avraham Shmuel Goldberg, who were killed in the attack; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority.

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Jerusalem
November 18, 2014

I strongly condemn today's terrorist attack on worshipers at a synagogue in Jerusalem, which killed four innocent people, including U.S. citizens Aryeh Kupinsky, Cary William Levine, and Mosheh Twersky, and injured several more. There is and can be no justification for such attacks against innocent civilians. The thoughts and prayers of the American people are with the victims and families of all those who were killed and injured in this horrific attack and in other recent violence. At this sensitive moment in Jerusalem, it is all the more important for Israeli and Palestinian leaders and ordinary citizens to work cooperatively together to lower tensions, reject violence, and seek a path forward towards peace.

NOTE: The statement referred to Avraham Shmuel Goldberg, who was killed in the attack at the Kehilat Bnei Torah synagogue.

Remarks at the White House ConnectED to the Future Conference
November 19, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Everybody, have a seat. Well, thank you, Alberto, for that introduction and, more importantly, for your outstanding leadership of the Miami-

Dade public schools. I thank all of you for joining us. We are here to take another step toward making sure that all of our kids get the education that they need in the 21st century.

And it's great to welcome so many committed educators to the White House. If you need, by the way, a note to excuse your absence—[*laughter*]—let me know. [*Laughter*] You're all kind playing hooky today. [*Laughter*]

We've got superintendents here from more than a hundred school districts, as close as just across the river in Arlington, to across the continent in Alaska. And we are joining a lot of folks over the Internet as well. In a few minutes, all of you are going to sign a pledge to make sure that your districts are doing what it takes to be ready for the future. And we've also got some people here who share your commitment to education, including Members of Congress and our Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. Where is Arne Duncan? Where is he? He's gone! [*Laughter*] He's playing hooky too! [*Laughter*] No, I think—I'm sure he's got some very important things—[*laughter*]. Yes. Poor Arne, he's being called out right now. [*Laughter*]

Look, as President, every decision I make is aimed at one goal, and that is to restore opportunity for everybody who's willing to work hard in our society. Six years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, our businesses have added over 10.6 million new jobs during the course of 56 months. For the first time in more than 6 years, the unemployment rate is below 6 percent. And we've made gains in education, thanks to the hard work of school leaders like you. Dropout rates are down. The graduation rate is the highest on record. More young people are earning college degrees than ever before.

But in a 21st-century economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is knowledge—and the capacity to learn new knowledge—we've got to do more to offer our children a world-class education. We've got to make high-quality pre-K available to every child so that they get the benefit of early enrichment and they come to school prepared. We have to encourage more young people—especially young women and minority students—to study in the fields of the future, like math, technology, engineering, science. We need to keep working to redesign our high schools to offer more hands-on learning opportunities that can lead directly to jobs and careers and can engage students in different ways based on their interests and their learning styles.

We need teachers who know how to make learning come alive, with personalized instruction and project-based learning. And we've got to do more to make sure that our teachers are supported and receive the kind of professional training and best practices—and I personally think higher pay—that's going to encourage the best and the brightest continue to be in the field. We've got to make sure that no striving young person is priced out of a college education.

These are all critical ingredients to our effort at continuous improvement in education. And one of the things that we also need to do is to yank our schools into the 21st century when it comes to technology and providing the tools and training that teachers need to use that technology to prepare all of our students for the competition that they're going to face globally.

Other countries are doing this. They are trying to outeducate us today so that they can outcompete us tomorrow. South Korea is replacing all of its textbooks with digital content and training all of its teachers to use technology in the classroom. Singapore is equipping every school with broadband that's over 40 times faster than the connection in the average American home. So we're going to have to step up our game if we're going to make sure that every child in America can go as far as their dreams and talents will take them.

And that's why, last year, I launched an initiative called ConnectED. It's a 5-year plan to close the technology gap in our schools and connect 99 percent of Americans—students to high-speed Internet.

And this is why it's important. Right now fewer than 40 percent of public schools have high-speed Internet in their classrooms, less than half. That's not good, since we invented

the Internet. [*Laughter*] It's not good. [*Laughter*] It means that in most American schools, teachers cannot use the cutting-edge software and programs that are available today. They literally don't have the bandwidth. And even in schools where there is high-speed Internet, so often, there aren't enough computers to go around, so only a small percentage of our classrooms have the 1-to-1 ratio of students to computers or tablets. And that means that, in too many schools, if a teacher wants to use the Internet for a lesson, then kids have to crowd around one desk to follow along or they have to break up into groups and sequentially come in.

Now, I've said before, in a country where we expect free Wi-Fi with our coffee—[*laughter*]—the least we can do is expect that our schools are properly wired. And when many of us can't go even an hour—my staff, it's like every 2 minutes—[*laughter*]—without reaching for a tablet or a smartphone, we've got to make sure these devices are within reach of our students. Because outside of school, they're certainly understanding how to use technology. That's where they're living. And if we aren't incorporating that into how they are learning in the classroom, then we're not doing our job. We've got to bring the world to every child's fingertips, because they're already more technologically savvy than we are, but if they think that the school is 20, 30 years behind, then they're going to lose interest in school.

So, earlier this year, I announced new steps toward making the vision of ConnectED a reality. The FCC decided to double its investment in broadband for schools, investing an additional $2 billion over 2 years. That's a step that will connect more than 15,000 schools and 20 million students to high-speed Internet. And that investment will help some of the school districts represented in this room. Then, just this week, FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler unveiled his plan to help us finish the job and reach our ultimate goal of connecting 99 percent of students within five years.

But as I've said from the day that we launched this initiative, this is not just a role for government or the Federal Government. We also asked some of America's foremost tech companies to help bring our schools into the 21st century. And their response has been inspiring. So far, 10 companies have made commitments totaling more than $2 billion. So Apple, for example, has pledged $100 million, which is going to 114 schools across 29 States. Students will get iPads. Teachers will get McBooks—or MacBooks, depending on how you say it. [*Laughter*] Classrooms will get Apple TV.

And that's just one of many commitments. Students are using software from Adobe to design new animal species, software from Autodesk to create fuel-efficient cars. Teachers are using presentation software from Prezi to help kids understand how solar systems work. Other companies are providing hundreds of millions of dollars in software, eBooks, teacher training. And 100,000 high-need students will receive free wireless service. For students who spend hours on the bus every day, that means that they're going to be able to keep working while they're commuting, in between texting their friends, of course. [*Laughter*]

Schools in all 50 States are already taking advantage of these commitments. And you can find out how your school district could benefit at whitehouse.gov/connectED.

So today I'm proud to announce that two companies that provide online courses are getting on board. EdX has already offered its Advanced Placement–level courses for free. Now it's making the certification for those courses free as well. So, if you're a student who's mastered the material, but can't afford the certification that proves it, EdX will provide it. They're offering more than a dozen training courses to teachers nationwide for free.

And for the next year, the company Coursera will offer free credentials for district-approved professional development courses to any teacher, anywhere in the country. Because all the wireless devices and fancy software in the world won't make a difference unless we have great teachers in the classroom.

And early on, when I was still in Chicago, as a senator, and I got interested in this issue, sometimes, you'd walk in the classroom, there would be brand new computers, but the students who were sitting at the computers, all

they were doing were doing—the same problem sets that they were getting on mimeograph or Xerox before—now they were doing on the computer screen. There was no sense of how to use the tool in a powerful way. And that's why we very much appreciate the offerings by these companies, understanding that we want to make this as accessible as possible.

So the—closing the technology gap is going to take more than fiber-optic cable, it's going to take more than portable hotspots and wireless projectors. It will take more than policymakers in Washington or even Silicon Valley CEOs. It's going to take teachers, principals, superintendents who get it, who understand the power of these tools when used creatively and who are willing to make changes and push reforms and test new ideas. And we want to help you do that.

So today we're making two new tools available. First, because we know a lot of school districts aren't sure what digital infrastructure to invest in or how to pay for it or what they'll get out of it, we've put together an infrastructure guide to help you make the best decisions based on your resources and needs.

Second, we've created a "learning toolkit" with goals and checklists for teachers and principals so they can turn these tools into better outcomes for students. And this is all based on best practices that have been collated from around the country. And over the next year, my administration will convene 12 regional summits for superintendents and principals nationwide to help more districts get ready for the future.

So you've got the resources. We've got some of the money coming out of ConnectED. We've got the companies participating. Now we're going to work with you on a regional basis, State by State so that we can start stitching all this together to actually deliver to kids in the classroom.

Now, a lot of you are already doing this. So Karen Tarasevich—where is Karen? There she is. I'm glad she wasn't with Arne somewhere playing hooky. [*Laughter*] Karen is the superintendent in the West Warwick Public Schools in Rhode Island. It's a city with higher than average unemployment, and a lot of students' families don't have computers at home. So they came up with a "one-to-one" initiative to help solve both problems. Every student gets a laptop to use at home and at school. And parents are encouraged to use the laptops too, to take online job training courses. So there's a booth set up at every parents' night where moms and dads can sign up.

And then you've got Mary Wegner, superintendent of the Sitka, Alaska, School District. Where is Mary? She came a long way. There she is. Yes, give her a hand for coming from Alaska. I was wondering why it was so cold today. [*Laughter*] Now, this is a remote place. You can only get to Sitka by plane or by boat.

So how many transfers did you have to make to finally get here?

Sitka School District Superintendent Mary Wegner. Three.

The President. Three. That's not bad. [*Laughter*]

So, 6 years ago, the technology in the schools was so outdated, only a few people could even print documents, and logging on to the Internet could take 20 minutes. Today, with the help of the Recovery Act, the whole district has Wi-Fi. The ratio of computers to students is 4 to 1 and falling. Kids are Skyping in class with experts from all over the world on a whole range of subjects. And Sitka is now in the top tier of districts in the State. It's been transformative.

Darryl Adams is the superintendent of the Coachella Valley Unified School District in California. Where is he? There you go. Good to see you. One of the poorest school districts in the country. And a few years ago, Coachella started providing every student from pre-K to high school with a tablet of their own. Is that one of them that you—yes? [*Laughter*] You didn't take that from a student, did you? [*Laughter*] Okay.

They paid for it through a bond measure, which voters overwhelmingly approved. So the whole community is committed to their children's education. Many students still don't have Internet access at home, but the district found a solution for that too. They're putting Wi-Fi routers on school buses and parking them across the district every night. This is really

smart, right? So you've got underutilized resources—buses in the evening—you put the routers on, disperse them, and suddenly, everybody is connected. Now it's not just students who can get online, it's their families as well.

So I know a lot of superintendents have stories like these. You've found innovative ways to reach your students and improve your schools. And today, the best news of all is you're taking the next step—along with 1,200 other superintendents nationwide—by signing the "Future Ready District Pledge." Don't sign yet. [*Laughter*] Because we're all going to do it together, and it will be fun. [*Laughter*]

So it's a vision for digital learning in classrooms across America: helping schools and families make the leap to high-speed Internet, supporting teachers and principals who use technology in innovative ways, and helping every student gain access to digital devices and high-quality digital content. And it's a promise to help other school districts do the same. That's key. This can't stop with you. Every kid needs every superintendent in America to sign this pledge and then follow through on the pledge. Our kids need every school district to make these commitments. Every child—whether they live in a big city, quiet suburb, the furthest reaches of rural America, poor districts, rich districts—every child deserves a shot at a world-class education.

That's the promise we make as a nation. That's what makes our Nation great: this fundamental belief that no matter who you are, where you come from, what you look like, you can make it in this country if you work hard. You have access to the tools to achieve. If we keep working at this, that's a promise we can make real for this generation and generations to come.

All right. So with that, I think all the superintendents are ready to sign this pledge for our kids. Everybody, get your tablets out. You ready? All right, go at it. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, school superintendents in the audience signed the "Future Ready District Pledge" on tablet computers.*]

You're being tested. [*Laughter*] All right. You've got 10 more seconds. I see some people lagging behind. [*Laughter*] All right, time. [*Laughter*] Everybody get it?

Audience members. Yes.

The President. Okay. If you didn't, if you're still figuring it out—[*laughter*]—I won't tell. [*Laughter*]

But let me just close by saying this. I—we're so inundated, I think, with news of mayhem and mishap and war and disease. I think sometimes we forget how much good work is just being done day in and day out by a lot of good people who just care about their kids, care about their communities. In your districts, I know there are just extraordinary teachers and principals who are putting everything they've got into making sure our kids are getting a great education. And you've got parents who are stepping up and volunteering and helping to make those schools work. So, as you disperse, one message I want you to deliver to all of them from the White House, from the President of the United States, is even if you're not getting a lot of attention, even if you're not making a lot of headlines, what you're doing every single day is making the biggest possible difference in the life of this country. And I couldn't be prouder of you. All right?

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Alberto M. Carvalho, superintendent, Miami-Dade Public Schools.

Remarks on Signing the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014
November 19, 2014

The President. Well, as many of you know, one of my top priorities is making sure that we've got affordable, high-quality childcare and early childhood education for our young people across the country. Today I am pleased to sign a bill into law that will—is going to

bring us closer to that goal. That's the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant program. I want to thank bipartisan Members of Congress who are here today.

This law is going to do several important things. It's going to improve the quality of childcare by requiring more training for caregivers and more enrichment for children. It's going to improve child safety by instituting background checks for staff and better inspection of facilities. It's going to give working parents a little more peace of mind. If you receive subsidies to pay for your childcare, you know that if you get a raise on your job or you find a job, your kids aren't automatically losing their care because your status has changed midstream.

I first proposed legislation to accomplish some of these goals back in 2010. When we couldn't get it through Congress, we began a rulemaking process to try to do this through executive efforts, and Sylvia Burwell, the HHS Secretary, is here. Because the legislation has now passed, we are actually ending the rulemaking process because we've now got a law, and we're going to be able to focus on implementing the law.

And I want to thank all the legislators here. It's a good step forward. It shows that Democrats and Republicans, when it comes to making sure our kids are getting the best possible education, are united. And that's good for our kids, and that's good for our country.

So with that, I'm going to make sure that I sign this properly, using all these pens. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, the President began signing the bill.*]

The President. I love signing bills. I'd like doing it more often. [*Laughter*] What do you say, guys? [*Laughter*] Yes, it's good.

[*The President continued signing the bill.*]

Senator Thomas R. Harkin. Well, I would note for the record that this is the 21st bill from the Committee that Lamar and I chair and have ranking membership on—21st bill that you've signed into law in the last 2 years.

The President. Well, the—that's because you and Lamar are some pretty productive legislators who actually are focused on getting stuff done. And we're very proud of you, and we're proud of all the legislators who are here today. So congratulations, everybody. Good. Good job. [*Applause*] Great job, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. A. Lamar Alexander, Jr. S. 1086, approved November 19, was assigned Public Law No. 113–186.

Remarks on Presenting the National Medal of Science and the National Medal of Technology and Innovation
November 20, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Please, please, have a seat. Well, hello, everybody. Welcome to the White House.

If you've ever been in a situation where you're a little self-conscious because you feel like maybe everybody in the room is a little smarter than you—[*laughter*]—today you are right. [*Laughter*] That's how I'm feeling, because it—today it's my pleasure to welcome a truly extraordinary group of men and women, some of the world's greatest scientists and researchers, and I've got the extraordinary honor of presenting them with our Nation's highest honor for scientific and technological achievement, the National Medals of Science and the National Medals of Technology and Innovation.

Now, to join us in celebrating these innovators, I want to welcome the Members of Congress who are here with us. We also have Interior Secretary Sally Jewell. We've got my Science Adviser, John Holdren; National Science

Foundation Director France Cordova; Deputy Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Michelle Lee, who—whose work helps to oversee the granting of these awards; and our National Science and Technology Medals Foundation Chair, James Rathmann.

Now, as many of you know, every year I host the White House Science Fair. These boys and girls are as young as 6 years old. Sometimes, their projects are a little messy. [*Laughter*] There was the cannon that fired the marshmallow into the White House wall—[*laughter*]—and left a little mark, which is still there.

Earlier this year, I also hosted the first White House Maker Faire. The participants there were a little older. And I met a giant, 17-foot-tall, 2,000-pound robotic talking giraffe. [*Laughter*] We had a little chat, and that was unique. [*Laughter*]

But the boys and girls and all the makers and thinkers across the country who I welcome here are an inspiration. It's one of the favorite things that I have the pleasure of doing as President. They're often at the beginning of a lifetime of asking questions and pushing boundaries and discovering things that hadn't been discovered before and innovating in ways that transform our world. And ultimately, that's what America is about. That's one of the things that makes America exceptional: this sense that we push against limits and that we're not afraid to ask questions. And when that spirit, that sense of possibility, is truly unleashed, then you get the remarkable men and women that you see here today.

Their achievements span disciplines, span industries. There is a common thread, though, that runs through their stories. At a young age, an encouraging parent or captivating teacher was able to whet their appetite for the scientific process.

Unmatched opportunities and generous funding at American universities drew some of them here from distant shores. Because the American scientific community empowers young researchers, some of today's honorees, at a very young age, conducted their own experiments, ran their own labs, published their own findings. Our country's diversity, our—its infrastructure, its universities, and our willingness to take risks on new ideas made America the place to start new businesses and new ventures.

And the results of the work of the people we honor today have transformed our world. Because of these men and women, we can use a thumb drive to store a universe of information on a postage-sized gadget, unconnected to a power source, and have the data intact a century later.

In fact, I've got a little gift here. [*Laughter*] Apparently, this was for my library. I was going to—I was told I could store all my documents on this thing. [*Laughter*] So I'm keeping it in my pocket.

We can manufacture better blood-clotting agents and water filtration systems, like those used in the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear accident. Using breakthrough algorithms, we can model our planet's future climate and the tiny valves in our own hearts. And we can treat cancer, strokes, macular degeneration. In short, because of these innovators, our lives are healthier, our economy is stronger, our futures brighter.

Today's honorees are also a reminder of the power of perseverance. They achieved their most meaningful gains when they were optimistic in the face of skepticism and doubt, when they crept out onto that farthest limb, and equipped with scientific reason to believe in their own theories and because they weren't afraid to fail once in a while. They figured that eventually they'd crack open some mystery that hadn't been solved and the world would catch up.

So, 1 month after Neil Armstrong landed on the Moon, Eli Harari came to America from Israel to study the effects of radiation on electronics in space. The physics he learned as a Ph.D. student at Princeton led him to cofound SanDisk, and eventually, to the creation and commercialization of flash storage technology. And today, his technology is in millions of portable electronic devices, which our lives would be completely different without. Certainly, Malia and Sasha's lives would be completely different without them. [*Laughter*]

At the time he invented it, though, his technology was too early for consumer goods, and SanDisk almost went out of business. But with patience, he drove costs down, opened large-scale markets. Describing his experience in America, he said, "We could not have done it anywhere else in the world."

Mary Shaw stumbled into computer science in high school, and as a college student, she walked into a busy engineering building in search of the computer lab. And she says, "When I first showed up, they handed me a user manual and told me to go read it, and silly me, I thought it was an invitation, so I did read it, and I came back." [*Laughter*]

She applied to Carnegie Mellon the same year they formed a graduate degree program in computer science, and she's been there ever since, pioneering new ways to educate students in computer science and converting the emerging field into a curriculum and also textbooks used all across the Nation.

Douglas Lowy and John Schiller have collaborated for nearly 30 years. And together, they developed the technology that led to the vaccine to prevent the cancer-causing HPV virus. When they presented their research to drug companies, many told them that while their data looked good, a vaccine against this sexually transmitted disease just wasn't going to work. But with the help of NIH research funding, they helped create one of the most successful preventive treatments in decades, potentially saving the lives of millions of young women and girls.

So the story—I'm just giving you a sample—the story of these trailblazers reflect our larger American experience: our story of constant transformation, pushing against limits. These folks represent the spirit that has always defined us, one of restless inquiry, searching for the right solution to any problem; an inclination to dream big and to tinker and to pull things apart and put them back together again; an insistence on making our dreams come true.

As Thomas Kailath, one of our honorees today, says, "Scientists are intrinsically hopeful and believe in grand answers and that if we work hard enough, we can find some of them in our lifetime." And that's a good phrase: "intrinsically hopeful." I'm intrinsically hopeful. [*Laughter*] I am. I—[*applause*]. That's who I am. That's who we are as a people, as Americans, as a nation. We've had to fight to make stories like the ones here in this room not only possible, but sometimes likely.

Now, that can't happen when half of our Nation's high schools don't offer calculus and more than a third of our high schools don't offer physics. So that's why we're going to need more science classes on the course schedule. That's why we need teachers with math and science backgrounds, educators who can show their students how chemistry and computer science can open the door to a whole new world.

That's why, 5 years ago, I launched my campaign to get more kids in STEM classes and later set a goal of training a hundred thousand new STEM teachers over the course of the next decade, not just to teach, but to teach math and science. And we partnered with 200 organizations like the Carnegie Foundation in New York and AT&T to pursue that goal. Today we're announcing that our many partners will invest an additional $28 million toward increasing the number of STEM teachers in the classroom across the country. And that's worthy of applause—[*applause*]—because we need to be focused on that.

Four years ago, we called on business leaders from America's leading companies to join us in this effort. And since then, this coalition has raised tens of millions of dollars to help strengthen many of our country's most effective STEM education programs and get them broadened out across the country. And today we can announce that over the next 2 years, this coalition will help bring these programs to an additional 1 million students across America. So this is extraordinary work.

Finally, part of preserving America's scientific edge is making sure we continue to welcome the best and brightest minds from around the world. So Thomas Kailath came to this country from India at the age of 22, with a research assistantship that took him to MIT and then Stanford, where he made critical

contributions in information theory and statistics and mentored more than a hundred scholars along the way.

After he came here as a foreign student from Israel, Eli Harari cofounded SanDisk with two colleagues, one from India, another from China. Alexandre Chorin, whose accomplishments led to a sea change in the way a generations of mathematicians use computers, sums up his experience this way: "I came here as a foreigner on an American fellowship, received the opportunity to study at great schools and work at great universities, and have been treated as if I belonged."

Treated as if I belonged. You do belong, because this is America and we welcome people from all around the world who have that same striving spirit. We're not defined by tribe or bloodlines. We're defined by a creed, an idea. And we want that tradition to continue. But too often, we're losing talent because, after the enormous investment we make in students and young researchers, we tell them to go home after they graduate. We tell them, take your talents and potential someplace else.

So part of staying competitive in a global economy is making sure that we have an immigration system that doesn't send away talent, but attracts it. We want them to initiate new discoveries and start businesses right here in the United States. So that's what I'll be talking about a little bit tonight. [*Laughter*] It's part of keeping America prosperous and keeping America strong. The—[*applause*].

So I want to congratulate these extraordinary men and women for their accomplishments. I want to thank each of you for the contributions that you've made to our country and the world: your passion, your persistence, your "intrinsic hopefulness."

And it is now my privilege to present the National Medals of Science and the National Medals of Technology and Innovation.

So we're going to read some citations here.

[*At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Timothy J. Myers, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citations and the President presented the medals, assisted by Lt. Cmdr. Jillian C. Malzone, USCG, Coast Guard Aide to the President.*]

The President. Let's give a big round of applause to all our awardees. We are—we couldn't be prouder of all of you.

And I hope, for those who are watching or those who read stories or reports about this, that we're all reminded once again of the role of science and discovery and invention and reason in our lives. Sometimes, we spend a lot of time lifting up sports heroes, and nobody is a bigger sports fan than I am. We extol the virtues of our singers and our movie stars, and I like entertainment too. But we have to remind ourselves constantly that so much of what has set us apart economically, culturally, is our commitment to science. And we have to continue to broaden opportunities for young scientists, especially girls and minority students, to enter into the field, and we have to remind them of how exciting it is to be able to shape the world, unlock its secrets, make new stuff. That's who we are.

So, hopefully, in addition to being able to highlight the extraordinary work of some extraordinary individuals, that we're going to go out there and remind ourselves once again about why science and discovery and invention is so important. All right?

I hope all of you have a wonderful reception. I hear the food here is pretty good. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sanjay Mehrotra, cofounder, president, and chief executive officer, and Jack Yuan, cofounder, SanDisk Corp. Participating in the ceremony were National Medal of Science recipients Bruce Alberts, Robert Axelrod, May Berenbaum, David Blackwell, Alexandre J. Chorin, Thomas Kailath, Judith P. Klinman, Jerrold Meinwald, Burton Richter, and Sean C. Solomon; and National Medal of Technology and Innovation recipients Charles W. Bachman, Edith M. Flanigen, Eliyahou Harari, Thomas J. Fogarty, Arthur Levinson, Cherry A. Murray, Mary Shaw, Douglas Lowy, and John Schiller. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citations.

Address to the Nation on Immigration Reform
November 20, 2014

My fellow Americans, tonight I'd like to talk with you about immigration.

For more than 200 years, our tradition of welcoming immigrants from around the world has given us a tremendous advantage over other nations. It's kept us youthful, dynamic, and entrepreneurial. It has shaped our character as a people with limitless possibilities, people not trapped by our past, but able to remake ourselves as we choose.

But today, our immigration system is broken, and everybody knows it. Families who enter our country the right way and play by the rules watch others flout the rules. Business owners who offer their workers good wages and benefits see the competition exploit undocumented immigrants by paying them far less. All of us take offense to anyone who reaps the rewards of living in America without taking on the responsibilities of living in America. And undocumented immigrants who desperately want to embrace those responsibilities see little option but to remain in the shadows or risk their families being torn apart. It's been this way for decades. And for decades, we haven't done much about it.

When I took office, I committed to fixing this broken immigration system. And I began by doing what I could to secure our borders. Today, we have more agents and technology deployed to secure our southern border than at any time in our history. And over the past 6 years, illegal border crossings have been cut by more than half. Although this summer there was a brief spike in unaccompanied children being apprehended at our border, the number of such children is now actually lower than it's been in nearly 2 years. Overall, the number of people trying to cross our border illegally is at its lowest level since the 1970s. Those are the facts.

Meanwhile, I worked with Congress on a comprehensive fix, and last year, 68 Democrats, Republicans, and Independents came together to pass a bipartisan bill in the Senate. It wasn't perfect. It was a compromise. But it reflected common sense. It would have doubled the number of border patrol agents while giving undocumented immigrants a pathway to citizenship if they paid a fine, started paying their taxes, and went to the back of the line. And independent experts said that it would help grow our economy and shrink our deficits.

Had the House of Representatives allowed that kind of bill a simple yes-or-no vote it would have passed with support from both parties, and today, it would be the law. But for a year and a half now, Republican leaders in the House have refused to allow that simple vote.

Now, I continue to believe that the best way to solve this problem is by working together to pass that kind of commonsense law. But until that happens, there are actions I have the legal authority to take as President—the same kinds of actions taken by Democratic and Republican Presidents before me—that will help make our immigration system more fair and more just.

Tonight I am announcing those actions. First, we'll build on our progress at the border with additional resources for our law enforcement personnel so that they can stem the flow of illegal crossings and speed the return of those who do cross over. Second, I'll make it easier and faster for high-skilled immigrants, graduates, and entrepreneurs to stay and contribute to our economy, as so many business leaders have proposed. Third, we'll take steps to deal responsibly with the millions of undocumented immigrants who already live in our country.

I want to say more about this third issue, because it generates the most passion and controversy. Even as we are a nation of immigrants, we're also a nation of laws. Undocumented workers broke our immigration laws, and I believe that they must be held accountable, especially those who may be dangerous. That's why, over the past 6 years, deportations of criminals are up 80 percent. And that's why we're going to keep focusing enforcement resources on actual threats to our security: felons, not families;

criminals, not children; gang members, not a mom who's working hard to provide for her kids. We'll prioritize, just like law enforcement does every day.

But even as we focus on deporting criminals, the fact is, millions of immigrants in every State, of every race and nationality, still live here illegally. And let's be honest: Tracking down, rounding up, and deporting millions of people isn't realistic. Anyone who suggests otherwise isn't being straight with you. It's also not who we are as Americans. After all, most of these immigrants have been here a long time. They work hard, often in tough, low-paying jobs. They support their families. They worship at our churches. Many of their kids are American-born or spent most of their lives here, and their hopes, dreams, and patriotism are just like ours. As my predecessor President Bush once put it, "They are a part of American life."

Now, here's the thing: We expect people who live in this country to play by the rules. We expect that those who cut the line will not be unfairly rewarded. So we're going to offer the following deal: If you've been in America for more than 5 years; if you have children who are American citizens or legal residents; if you register, pass a criminal background check, and you're willing to pay your fair share of taxes, you'll be able to apply to stay in this country temporarily without fear of deportation. You can come out of the shadows and get right with the law. That's what this deal is.

Now, let's be clear about what it isn't. This deal does not apply to anyone who has come to this country recently. It does not apply to anyone who might come to America illegally in the future. It does not grant citizenship or the right to stay here permanently or offer the same benefits that citizens receive. Only Congress can do that. All we're saying is, we're not going to deport you.

I know some of the critics of this action call it amnesty. Well, it's not. Amnesty is the immigration system we have today: millions of people who live here without paying their taxes or playing by the rules, while politicians use the issue to scare people and whip up votes at election time.

That's the real amnesty: leaving this broken system the way it is. Mass amnesty would be unfair. Mass deportation would be both impossible and contrary to our character. What I'm describing is accountability, a commonsense, middle-ground approach: If you meet the criteria, you can come out of the shadows and get right with the law. If you're a criminal, you'll be deported. If you plan to enter the U.S. illegally, your chances of getting caught and sent back just went up.

The actions I'm taking are not only lawful, they're the kinds of actions taken by every single Republican President and every single Democratic President for the past half century. And to those Members of Congress who question my authority to make our immigration system work better or question the wisdom of me acting where Congress has failed, I have one answer: Pass a bill.

I want to work with both parties to pass a more permanent legislative solution. And the day I sign that bill into law, the actions I take will no longer be necessary. Meanwhile, don't let a disagreement over a single issue be a deal breaker on every issue. That's not how our democracy works, and Congress certainly shouldn't shut down our Government again just because we disagree on this. Americans are tired of gridlock. What our country needs from us right now is a common purpose, a higher purpose.

Most Americans support the types of reforms I've talked about tonight. But I understand the disagreements held by many of you at home. Millions of us, myself included, go back generations in this country, with ancestors who put in the painstaking work to become citizens. So we don't like the notion that anyone might get a free pass to American citizenship.

I know some worry immigration will change the very fabric of who we are or take our jobs or stick it to middle class families at a time when they already feel like they've gotten the raw deal for over a decade. I hear those concerns. But that's not what these steps would do. Our history and the facts show that immigrants are a net plus for our economy and our

society. And I believe it's important that all of us have this debate without impugning each other's character.

Because for all the back and forth of Washington, we have to remember that this debate is about something bigger. It's about who we are as a country and who we want to be for future generations.

Are we a nation that tolerates the hypocrisy of a system where workers who pick our fruit and make our beds never have a chance to get right with the law? Or are we a nation that gives them a chance to make amends, take responsibility, and give their kids a better future?

Are we a nation that accepts the cruelty of ripping children from their parents' arms? Or are we a nation that values families and works together to keep them together?

Are we a nation that educates the world's best and brightest in our universities, only to send them home to create businesses in countries that compete against us? Or are we a nation that encourages them to stay and create jobs here, create businesses here, create industries right here in America?

That's what this debate is all about. We need more than politics as usual when it comes to immigration. We need reasoned, thoughtful, compassionate debate that focuses on our hopes, not our fears. I know the politics of this issue are tough. But let me tell you why I have come to feel so strongly about it.

Over the past years, I have seen the determination of immigrant fathers who worked two or three jobs without taking a dime from the government and at risk any moment of losing it all, just to build a better life for their kids. I've seen the heartbreak and anxiety of children whose mothers might be taken away from them just because they didn't have the right papers. I've seen the courage of students who, except for the circumstances of their birth, are as American as Malia or Sasha, students who bravely come out as undocumented in hopes they could make a difference in the country they love.

These people—our neighbors, our classmates, our friends—they did not come here in search of a free ride or an easy life. They came to work and study and serve in our military and, above all, contribute to America's success.

Tomorrow I'll travel to Las Vegas and meet with some of these students, including a young woman named Astrid Silva. Astrid was brought to America when she was 4 years old. Her only possessions were a cross, her doll, and the frilly dress she had on. When she started school, she didn't speak any English. She caught up to other kids by reading newspapers and watching PBS, and she became a good student. Her father worked in landscaping. Her mom cleaned other people's homes. They wouldn't let Astrid apply to a technology magnet school, not because they didn't love her, but because they were afraid the paperwork would out her as an undocumented immigrant. So she applied behind their back and got in. Still, she mostly lived in the shadows, until her grandmother, who visited every year from Mexico, passed away, and she couldn't travel to the funeral without risk of being found out and deported. It was around that time she decided to begin advocating for herself and others like her, and today, Astrid Silva is a college student working on her third degree.

Are we a nation that kicks out a striving, hopeful immigrant like Astrid, or are we a nation that finds a way to welcome her in? Scripture tells us that we shall not oppress a stranger, for we know the heart of a stranger; we were strangers once too.

My fellow Americans, we are and always will be a nation of immigrants. We were strangers once too. And whether our forebears were strangers who crossed the Atlantic or the Pacific or the Rio Grande, we are here only because this country welcomed them in and taught them that to be an American is about something more than what we look like or what our last names are or how we worship. What makes us Americans is our shared commitment to an ideal: that all of us are created equal and all of us have the chance to make of our lives what we will.

That's the country our parents and grandparents and generations before them built for us. That's the tradition we must uphold. That's the legacy we must leave for those who are yet to come.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless this country we love.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:01 p.m. in the Cross Hall at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President George W. Bush; and Cesar and Barbara Silva, parents of immigration activist Astrid Silva. He also referred to S. 744. The related memorandums of November 21 are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at Del Sol High School in Las Vegas, Nevada
November 21, 2014

The President. Hello, Las Vegas! Good to see you again; you were here 2 years ago. It's good to be back at Del Sol High School. Go Dragons!

Let me just say that whenever I fly to Vegas on Air Force One, the plane is a little more crowded. [*Laughter*] For some reason, folks want to come to Vegas. But today it was also crowded with a whole bunch of people who have been passionate about making sure America always remains a nation of immigrants, including your Senator, Harry Reid; the leader of the Democrats in the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi; some extraordinary Members of Congress who have been leading on immigration reform. They are doing unbelievable work, and I want to just name a couple of them—and if I forget somebody, make sure I don't get into trouble—from left to right, we've got Xavier Becerra, Ben Lujan, Luis Gutierrez, Dina Titus, Steve Horsford, and Bob Menendez. We've got the son-in-law of Cesar Chavez and a hero to farmworkers in his own right, Arturo Rodriguez.

And I just want to—and since we're on farmworkers, a legend, somebody who has just been a great friend to working people all across the country, Dolores Huerta. Good to see you. Love you.

I'm so inspired by the introduction by Astrid. Last night, I spoke directly to the American people about immigration, and you heard me talk about Astrid. And if you watched her introduction just now, you heard her talk a little bit about herself.

She was brought here as a little girl and grew up believing in America and in her identity as an American, just like Malia or Sasha. And then, as she grew up, she found out that she was undocumented, which meant she couldn't do all the things her friends could do. She feared that she and her brother could be separated from their dad. And then one day, she decided to start advocating for her fellow DREAMers and to stand up for her family and to fight to make a difference in this country that she loves.

And part of what makes America exceptional is that we welcome exceptional people like Astrid. It makes us stronger. It makes us vibrant and dynamic. It makes us hopeful. We are a nation of immigrants, and that means that we're constantly being replenished with strivers who believe in the American Dream. And it gives us a tremendous advantage over other nations. It makes us entrepreneurial. It's a—it continues the promise that here in America, you can make it if you try, regardless of where you come from, regardless of the circumstances of your birth.

Now, our immigration system has been broken for a very long time, and everybody knows it. As Americans, we believe in fairness, the idea that if we work hard and play by the rules, we can get ahead. But too often, the immigration system feels fundamentally unfair. You've got families who try to come here the right way, but sometimes get separated or stuck in line for years. You've got business owners who are doing the right thing by their workers, offering good wages and benefits, and then you've got companies that are ignoring minimum wage laws or overtime laws, taking advantage of undocumented immigrants, and as a consequence, undercutting the employers who are doing the right thing.

All of us take offense to the idea that anybody can reap the rewards of living in America

without its responsibilities. And folks like Astrid and Astrid's parents—who desperately want to make amends, embrace the responsibilities of living here—they're forced to either live in the shadows or risk having their families torn apart.

We've known about this for years. And we've known we can do better. And for years, we haven't done much about it. Well, today, we're doing something about it.

Now, when I took office, I committed to fixing this broken system. And I began by doing what I could to secure our borders, because I do believe in secure borders. And over the past 6 years, illegal border crossings have been cut by more than half. Don't let all the rhetoric fool you. There was a brief spike this summer in unaccompanied children being apprehended at the border, but it was temporary, and the number of such children is now actually lower than it's been in nearly 2 years. Overall, the number of people trying to cross our border illegally is at its lowest level since the 1970s, when I was in high school. And I've got gray hair now—[*laughter*]—so it's been a long time.

And nearly 2 years ago, I came here, Del Sol High School, right in this gymnasium, and I said that the time had come for Congress to fix our broken immigration system. And I laid out some basic principles for reform that a lot of different parties could agree on. And what was remarkable was the consensus that started to develop. We had business leaders and labor leaders and evangelical leaders and law enforcement leaders; we had Republicans, and we had Democrats and Independents, and they all said that, yes, we should secure our borders, we should bring our legal immigration system into the 21st century, and then, once and for all, we should give the 11 million people living in the shadows a chance to make amends and earn their citizenship the right way.

So those were our principles. We laid them out. We were very clear. And after I laid out those principles, we then went to work with Congress. And we started in the Senate. And you ended up with a big majority of Democrats and Republicans and Independents all coming together in the Senate to pass a bipartisan bill based on these principles.

The Senate bill wasn't perfect; it was a compromise. That's how things work in Congress. That's how things work in a democracy. Not everybody was satisfied with every provision, but it was a good, solid, commonsense bill that would have made our immigration system a lot better.

It would have doubled the number of Border Patrol agents. So, for those who wanted more border security, that was in the bill. It would have made the legal immigration system smarter and fairer. It would have given the opportunity for young people who are talented and who have gotten a degree—maybe in computer science or some technical field—to stay here and work and contribute and create a business and create more jobs.

Audience member. Thank you, Mr. President!

The President. You're welcome. It would have given—[*applause*]. And it would have given millions of people that chance to get right with the law. But it wasn't just a gift. They would have had to pay a fine. They would have had to learn English. They would have had to get to the back of the line. They would have had to pay back taxes.

It was a sensible bill, and all these Members of Congress, they worked on it and were supportive of it. And independent experts—not me—people who analyze the economy for a living, they said that over two decades, the new law would grow our economy, shrink our deficits. In other words, it would help to solve some big problems in a bipartisan way. And nobody was happier than me. And when it passed the Senate, we said, all right, let's send it over to the House, we've got the votes in the House. We've got Democrats and Republicans who were prepared to vote for it in the House.

It has now been 512 days—a year and a half—in which the only thing standing in the way of that bipartisan bill and my desk so that I can sign that bill, the only thing that's been standing in the way is a simple yes-or-no vote in the House of Representatives. Just a yes-or-no vote. If they had allowed a vote on that kind

of bill, it would have passed. I would have signed it. It would be the law right now.

There are—these leaders right here tried to make it happen. Nancy Pelosi kept on saying to her—John Boehner, let's just call the bill, see where it goes. There are Republicans who worked hard on this bill too, and they deserve credit. Because even though it wasn't necessarily popular in their party, they knew it was the right thing to do.

But despite that, the party leadership in the House of Representatives would not let it come forward. And I cajoled, and I called, and I met. I told John Boehner, I'd—you know, I'll wash your car, I'll walk your dog—[*laughter*]—whatever you need to do, just call the bill. That's how democracy is supposed to work. And if the votes hadn't been there, then we would have had to start over. But at least give it a shot. And he didn't do it.

And the fact that a year and a half has gone by means that time has been wasted. And during that time, families have been separated. And during that time, businesses have been harmed. And we can't afford it anymore.

So, Las Vegas, I have come back to Del Sol to tell you I'm not giving up. I will never give up. I will never give up. [*Applause*] I will not give up.

Audience members. Si, se puede! Si, se puede! Si, se puede!

The President. So we're not giving up. We're going to keep on working with Members of Congress to make permanent reform a reality. But until that day comes, there are actions that I have the legal authority to take that will help make our immigration system more fair and more just. And this morning I began to take some of those actions.

So I talked about—I thought—I talked about what I could do based on talking to all the legal experts, talking to the Office of Legal Counsel. And not everything that we want to do we can do, but they told me what we could do. And I wasn't going to sit idly by and not do at least what I was authorized to do.

So, first, we're providing more resources to law enforcement so they can stem the flow of illegal crossings at our border and speed up the return of those who do cross over. I want to repeat that: Border security is important.

Second, we're making it easier for high-skilled immigrants, graduates, entrepreneurs to stay and contribute to our economy.

Third, we're going to take steps to deal responsibly with millions of undocumented immigrants who are already here. Now, as I did last night, I want to spend some extra time talking about the third step, because this is the one that brings up the strongest passions on both sides.

The truth is, undocumented workers broke our immigration laws. They didn't follow the rules in terms of how they were supposed to come. And I believe they should be held accountable. And some have proven to break other laws. Some are dangerous. That's why over the past 6 years, deportations of criminals are up 80 percent. And that's why we'll keep focusing enforcement resources on actual threats to our security. But that means felons, not families. That means criminals, not children. It means gang members, not moms who are trying to put food on their—on the table for their kids.

So, essentially, what we're doing is what law enforcement does every day. We've got limited resources, and so we're going to prioritize who are the folks who should be subject to removal, and that means that we've got to make sure that we've got clear rules in terms of how we're enforcing the law.

But even as we focus on deporting criminals, the fact is, millions of immigrants, they live here. And many of them have been here a very long time. And they're found in every State, and they're of every race and every nationality. I know a lot of people focus on the Latino community, but the truth is that——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]—does not qualify!

The President. ——the truth is that they're not just——

Audience member. We love you!

Audience members. Si, se puede! Si, se puede! Si, se puede!

The President. But the truth is——

Audience member. President Obama—[*inaudible*].

Audience member. We love you!

The President. The——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. That's right: Not everybody will qualify under this provision. That's the truth. And—that's the truth. That's why we're still going to have to pass a bill. That's why we're still going to have to pass a bill.

So listen, I heard you, and what I'm saying is, we're still going to have to pass a bill. This is not—this is a first step. It's not the only step. We're still going to have to do more work. So let—I've heard you. I've heard you, young man. I've heard you, and I understand. I've heard you. But what I'm saying is, this is just a first step. So, young man, I'm talking to a lot of people here. I've been respectful to you, I want you to be respectful to me, all right? [*Applause*] Okay.

Now, understand that not everybody who comes here is Latino. All right? Sometimes, that's the face of immigration. Let me tell you, I'm from Chicago. And we've got some Irish immigrants whose papers aren't in order. We've got some Polish immigrants whose papers are not in order. We've got some Ukrainian folks. Down in Florida we've got some Haitian folks. This is not just a Latino issue, this is an American issue. [*Applause*] This is an American issue.

And what we have to do is be honest that tracking down, rounding up, and deporting millions of people is not realistic. That's not who we are. Most undocumented immigrants are good, decent people. They have been here for a long time. They work, often in the toughest, most low paying jobs. They're trying hard to support their families. They worship at our churches. Their kids go to school with our kids.

They're—so the fact is that even Republicans who say that they don't want to pass this bill that was passed by these legislators, they're not serious about trying to deport 10, 11 million people. [*Laughter*] They—that's all rhetoric. Now, what we do expect is that people who are here play by the rules. You shouldn't get rewarded for cutting in line.

So we've offered the following deal: If you've been in America for more than 5 years, if you have children who are American citizens or legal residents, if you register, you pass a background check, you are willing to pay your fair share of taxes, then you're going to be able to apply to stay in this country temporarily without fear of deportation. You can come out of the shadows, get right with the law.

Now, let's be clear on what this deal is and what it isn't. This action doesn't apply to anybody who has come to this country recently. You can't show up for a week and then suddenly apply. You can't. Because borders mean something. It doesn't apply to anybody who might come illegally in the future. While I support a path to citizenship—and so do all these legislators here—this action doesn't grant citizenship or the right to stay permanently or receive the same benefits that citizens receive. Only Congress can do that. All we're saying is, we're not going to deport you and separate you from your kids.

Now, if you've taken responsibility, you've registered, undergone a background check, you're paying taxes, you've been here for 5 years, you've got roots in the community, you're not going to be deported. And I know some critics call this action amnesty. It's not amnesty. Amnesty really is the system we've got today. You've got millions of people who are living here, but they're not obliged to pay their taxes or play by the rules, and then, politicians just use the issue to scare people and whip up votes at election time.

So they just—they want to keep the system as is: people living in the shadows, maybe providing cheap labor, not subject to any worker protections, and then, you pretend like you're being tough on immigration. That's not the right way to do it. That's the real amnesty, just talking, leaving this broken system the way it is.

The bottom line is, mass amnesty would be unfair. But mass deportation would be both impossible and contrary to our country's character. That's not who we are. That's not who we are.

So what we are offering is accountability. It is accountability. It's a commonsense, middle-ground approach. If you meet the criteria, you

can come out of the shadows, you can get right with the law. If you are a criminal, you're going to be deported. If you plan to enter the United States illegally, your chances of getting caught and sent back are going up.

And for those who don't qualify under this rule, we're still going to need legislation. But the actions I've taken are not only lawful, they're the kinds of actions taken by every Republican President and every Democratic President for the past half century. Ronald Reagan took action to keep families together. The first President Bush took action to shield about 40 percent of undocumented immigrants at the time. This isn't something I'm doing as if it's never been done. This kind of thing has been done before.

So when Members of Congress question my authority to make our immigration system work better, I have a simple answer: Pass a bill. Pass a bill. Nobody is stopping them from passing a bill.

Audience members. Pass a bill! Pass a bill! Pass a bill!

The President. Pass a bill. I mean, I've got to admit, these days I don't always listen to all the commentary—[*laughter*]—but I understand that some of them are already saying that my actions "sabotage" their ability to pass a bill and make immigration work better. [*Laughter*] Why? I didn't dissolve parliament. That's not how our system works. [*Laughter*] I didn't steal away the various clerks in the Senate and the House who manage bills. They can still pass a bill. I don't have a vote in Congress. Pass a bill. You don't need me to call a vote to pass a bill. Pass a bill.

Because the actions I've taken are only a temporary first step. I don't have the authority to do some really important reforms. We should be creating new programs for farmworkers. We should be adding visas for the high-tech sector. We should be creating a pathway to citizenship. But only Congress can do that.

The House could still pass the bipartisan Senate bill before the end of the year. They still have time. They've still got—what are you guys scheduled to be in for, another 4 weeks? Right after Thanksgiving, call the bill. It's been sitting there. And if they don't want to pass that bill, then I pledge to work with Republicans and Democrats next year to pass a more permanent legislative solution. And the day I sign that bill into law, then the actions that I've taken will no longer be necessary. And I'll give everybody credit. I'll be happy to have John Boehner and Mitch McConnell alongside Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi and Luis Gutierrez and Bob Menendez and all these folks. We'll all have a nice signing ceremony.

So I just want to emphasize this issue. Because I hear some people say, well, we're in favor of immigration reform, but we don't think that it should be done without Congress. Well, Congress, go ahead and do it.

And meanwhile, Washington should not let disagreements over one issue be a deal breaker on every issue. That's not how our democracy works. Congress certainly should not shut down the Government again over this. Because Americans are tired of gridlock. We are ready to move forward. And we don't want to—and we just want sensible, commonsense approaches to problems.

Now, this debate deserves more than the usual politics, because for all the back and forth in Washington, as I said last night, this is about something bigger. This is about who we are. Who do we want to be?

America is not a nation that accepts the hypocrisy of workers who mow our lawns, make our beds, clean out bedpans, with no chance ever to get right with the law. We're a nation that gives people a chance to take responsibility and make amends and then create a better future for their kids.

America is not a nation that should be tolerating the cruelty of ripping children from their parents' arms. We're a nation that values families, and we should work together to keep them together.

America attracts talent from all around the world. We educate the world's young people in our universities, and then, we just send them home, even if they're wanting to start a business or they've got some specialized skill. We just send them home, and then they compete

against us. We should be encouraging the best and the brightest to study here and stay here and invest here and create jobs here and businesses here and industries here. You look at Silicon Valley, 30, 40 percent of the companies that we now take for granted that have changed our lives, they were started by immigrants.

So that's what this issue is all about. And that's why it deserves reasoned and thoughtful and compassionate debate. And that's why we have to focus not on our fears, we've got to focus on our hopes.

You know, every day we receive thousands, tens of thousands of letters and e-mails at the White House. And as you can imagine, for the past few days, a lot of them have been about immigration. They've come from good, decent people on both sides of this debate. And I want to—I want everybody here to understand, there are folks who are good, decent people who are worried about immigration. They're worried that it changes the fabric of our country. They're worried about whether immigrants take our—take jobs from hard-working Americans. And they're worried because they're feeling a lot of economic stress, and they feel as if maybe they're the ones paying taxes and nobody else is taking responsibility. So they've urged me not to act.

And I hear them. And I understand them. But you know, I've also got a lot of letters and e-mails reminding me why we had to act: from American family members of hard-working immigrants who feared their families could be torn apart; from DREAMers who had proudly stepped out of the shadows and were willing to live without fear, even though it was a big risk for them; from Republicans who don't agree with me on anything, but are tired of their party refusing to vote on reform.

One Republican who wrote me said this. He said he supported my decision, and he said—and I'm quoting—"I believe that a human being, created in the very image of Almighty God, is the greatest resource that we have in this country."

We're not a nation that kicks out strivers and dreamers who want to earn their piece of the American Dream. We're a nation that finds a way to welcome them. We make them earn it, but we welcome them in as fellow human beings, fellow children of God. And we harness their talents to make the future brighter for everybody.

We didn't raise the Statue of Liberty with her back to the world, we did it with her light shining as a beacon to the world. And whether we were Irish or Italians or Germans crossing the Atlantic or Japanese or Chinese crossing the Pacific, whether we crossed the Rio Grande or flew here from all over the world, generations of immigrants have made this country into what it is. It's what makes us special.

And whether we fled famine or war or persecution, whether we had the right documents or connections or skills, whether we were wealthy or poor, we all shared one thing, and that was hope that America would be the place where we could finally build a better life for ourselves and for our children and for future generations. Hope that America is the place where we could make it.

That's what makes us Americans. It's not what we look like. It's not what our last name is. It's not where we come from. It's not how we pray. What makes us American is a shared commitment to an ideal that all of us are created equal, all of us have a chance to make our lives what we will.

For generations, America—by choice and Americans by birth have come together to renew that common creed and move this country forward that brought us to this moment. That is the legacy that we now have to deliver to the next generation.

Thank you, Nevada. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Arturo S. Rodriguez, president, and Dolores C. Huerta, cofounder, United Farm Workers of America; immigration activist Astrid Silva, her brother Carlos Silva, and her parents Cesar and Barbara Silva; and Dawsonville, GA, resident Brett Duncan. He also referred to S. 744. The related memorandums of November 21 are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
November 22, 2014

Hi, everybody. Today I'm at Del Sol High School in Las Vegas to talk with students and families about immigration.

We're a nation of immigrants. It has always given America a big advantage over other nations. It keeps our country young, dynamic, and entrepreneurial. But today, our immigration system is broken, and everybody knows it.

That's why, nearly 2 years ago, I came to this school and laid out principles for immigration reform. And 5 months later, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents in the Senate came together to pass a commonsense compromise bill. That bill would have secured our border, while giving undocumented immigrants who already live here a pathway to citizenship if they paid a fine, started paying their taxes, and went to the back of the line. Independent experts said it would grow our economy and shrink our deficits.

Now, had the House of Representatives allowed a yes-or-no vote on that kind of bill, it would have passed with support from both parties. Today it would be the law. But, for a year and a half, Republican leaders in the House have refused to allow that simple vote. Now, I still believe that the best way to solve this problem is by working together—both parties—to pass that kind of bipartisan law. But until that happens, there are actions I have a legal authority to take as President—the same kinds of actions taken by Democratic and Republican Presidents before me—that will help make our immigration system more fair and more just.

I took those actions this week. We're providing more resources at the border to help law enforcement personnel stop illegal crossings and send home those who do cross over. We'll focus enforcement resources on people who are threats to our security: felons, not families; criminals, not children. And we'll bring more undocumented immigrants out of the shadows so they can play by the rules, pay their fair share of taxes, pass a criminal background check, and get right with the law.

Nothing about this action will benefit anyone who has come to this country recently or who might try and come to America illegally in the future. It does not grant citizenship or the right to stay here permanently, or offer the same benefits that citizens receive. And it's certainly not amnesty, no matter how often the critics say it. Amnesty is the immigration system we have today: millions of people living here without paying their taxes or playing by the rules. And the actions I took this week will finally start fixing that.

As you might have heard, there are Members of Congress who question my authority to make our immigration system work better. Well, I have one answer for that: Pass a bill. The day I sign it into law, the actions I've taken to help solve this problem will no longer be necessary.

In the meantime, we can't allow a disagreement over a single issue to be a deal breaker on every issue. That's not how our democracy works. This debate deserves more than politics as usual. It's important for our future. It's about who we are and the future we want to build.

We are only here because this country welcomed our forebears and taught them that being American is about more than what we look like or where we come from. What makes us Americans is our shared commitment to an ideal that all of us are created equal and all of us have the chance to make of our lives what we will. That's the country we inherited, and it's the one we have to leave for future generations.

Thank you, God bless you, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:30 p.m. on November 21 in the auxiliary gymnasium at Del Sol High School in Las Vegas, NV, for broadcast on November 22. In the address, the President referred to S. 744. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 21,

but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 22. The related memorandums of November 21 are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Death of Marion S. Barry, Jr.
November 23, 2014

Michelle and I were saddened to hear of the passing of Marion Barry. Marion was born a sharecropper's son, came of age during the civil rights movement, and became a fixture in DC politics for decades. As a leader with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Marion helped advance the cause of civil rights for all. During his decades in elected office in DC, he put in place historic programs to lift working people out of poverty, expand opportunity, and begin to make real the promise of home rule. Through a storied, at times tumultuous life and career, he earned the love and respect of countless Washingtonians, and Michelle and I extend our deepest sympathies to Marion's family, friends, and constituents today.

Remarks on the Resignation of Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel
November 24, 2014

The President. About a year ago, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel was visiting our troops in the Republic of Korea thanking them for their service and answering their questions, and they asked about the usual topics, about our national security, the future of our military. And then one soldier, a sergeant from Ohio, asked him what was the most pertinent question of the day, which was, what was your favorite college football team? To which Chuck replied: "Born and raised in Nebraska, I don't have a choice. I am a strong Cornhuskers fan."

Now, there was a time when an enlisted soldier might have been reluctant to ask that kind of question of the Secretary of Defense. But Chuck Hagel has been no ordinary Secretary of Defense. As the first enlisted combat veteran to serve in that position, he understands our men and women like few others, because he's stood where they stood, he's been in the dirt, and he's been in the mud, and that's established a special bond. He sees himself in them, and they see themselves in him. And their safety, their lives, have always been at the center of Chuck's service.

When I asked Chuck to serve as Secretary of Defense, we were entering a significant period of transition: the drawdown in Afghanistan, the need to prepare our forces for future missions, and tough fiscal choices to keep our military strong and ready. Over nearly 2 years, Chuck has been an exemplary Defense Secretary, providing a steady hand as we modernized our strategy and budget to meet long-term threats, while still responding to immediate challenges like ISIL and Ebola. Thanks to Chuck, our military is on a firmer footing, engaged in these missions and looking ahead to the future.

Now last month, Chuck came to me to discuss the final quarter of my Presidency and determined that having guided the Department through this transition, it was an appropriate time for him to complete his service. Let me just say that Chuck is and has been a great friend of mine. I've known him, admired him, and trusted him for nearly a decade since I was a green-behind-the-ears freshman Senator and we were both on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. If there's one thing I know about Chuck, it's that he does not make this or any decision lightly. This decision does not come easily to him, but I consider myself extraordinarily lucky to have had him by my side for 2 years, and I am grateful that Chuck has agreed to stay on until I nominate a successor and that successor is confirmed by the Senate, which means that he'll continue to guide our troops at this challenging time.

I'll have more opportunity to pay tribute to Chuck's life of service in the days ahead. For

now, let me just say this: Chuck Hagel has devoted himself to our national security and our men and women in uniform across more than six decades. He volunteered for Vietnam and still carries the scars and shrapnel from the battles that he fought. At the VA, he fought to give our veterans, especially his fellow Vietnam veterans, the benefits they had earned. As head of the USO, he made sure America always honors our troops. As a Senator, he helped lead the fight for the post-9/11 GI bill, which is helping so many of our newest veterans and their families realize their dreams of a college education. As Secretary, Chuck has helped transition our military and bolstered America's leadership around the world. During his tenure, Afghan forces took the lead for security in Afghanistan. Our forces have drawn down. Our combat mission there ends next month, and we'll partner with Afghans to preserve the gains we have made.

The NATO alliance is as strong as it has ever been, and we have reassured our allies with our increased presence in Central and Eastern Europe. We've modernized our alliances in the Asia-Pacific, updated our defense posture, and recently agreed to improve communications between the U.S. and Chinese militaries. Chuck has been critical to all these accomplishments.

Meanwhile, Chuck has ensured that our military is ready for new missions. Today, our men and women in uniform are taking the fight against ISIL in Iraq, in Syria, and Chuck helped build the international coalition to ensure that the world is meeting this threat together. Today, our forces are helping support the civilian effort against Ebola in West Africa, a reminder, as Chuck likes to say, that America's military is the greatest force for good in the world.

Finally, in a very difficult budgetary environment, Chuck has never lost sight of key priorities: the readiness of our force and the quality of our life of our troops and their families. He's launched new reforms to ensure that even as our military is leaner, it remains the strongest in the world, and so our troops can continue to get the pay, the housing, the healthcare, the childcare that they and their families need, reforms that we need Congress to now support. At the same time, after the tragedies that we've seen, Chuck has helped lead the effort to improve security at our military installations and to stamp out the scourge of sexual assault from the ranks.

And, Chuck, I also want to thank you on a personal level. We come from different parties, but in accepting this position, you sent a powerful message—especially to folks in this city—that when it comes to our national security and caring for our troops and their families, we are all Americans first. When I nominated you for this position, you said that you'd always give me your honest advice and informed counsel. You have. When it's mattered most—behind closed doors, in the Oval Office—you've always given it to me straight. And for that, I will always be grateful.

I recall when I was a nominee in 2008, and I traveled to Afghanistan and Iraq. Chuck Hagel accompanied me on that trip along with Jack Reed. And it's pretty rare, at a time when sometimes this town is so politicized, to have a friend who was willing to accompany a nominee from another party because he understood that, whoever ended up being President, what was most important was that we were unified when we confronted the challenges that we see overseas. And that's the kind of class and integrity that Chuck Hagel has always represented.

Now, Chuck, you've said that a life is only as good as the family you have and the friends you surround yourself with. And in that, you are blessed. I want to thank Lilibet, your son Ziller, and your daughter Allyn for the sacrifices that they've made as well.

Secretary Hagel. Thank you.

The President. I know that as reluctant as we are to see you go, they are equally excited to getting their husband and father back. And I'm sure the Cornhuskers are also happy that a fan will be there to cheer them on more often.

Today, the United States of America can proudly claim the strongest military the world has ever known. That's the result of the investments made over many decades, the blood and treasure and sacrifices of generations. It's the

result of the character and wisdom of those who lead them as well, including a young Army sergeant in Vietnam who rose to serve as our Nation's 24th Secretary of Defense. So, on behalf of a grateful nation, thank you, Chuck.

Secretary Hagel. Thank you very much.

Mr. President, thank you. Thank you for your generous words, for your friendship, for your support, which I have always valued and will continue to value. And to my not old, but my longtime, dear friend Vice President Biden, who I have always admired and respected, and both the President and I have learned an awful lot from the Vice President over the years. Thank you.

And I want to thank the Deputy Secretary of Defense who is here, Bob Work, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Marty Dempsey, who also is here. I want to thank them for being here this morning. I also want to thank you both for your tremendous leadership of the Defense Department and what you mean to our men and women and their families all over the world and for the honor I've had to serve with each of you and the privilege it's been in every way.

And I want to thank the entire leadership team at the Pentagon. Without their support and wise counsel over the last couple of years, our many accomplishments, and the President noted some, I have been part of that, but it's a team. It's all these tremendous men and women, as you know, Mr. President, that make this happen, and I couldn't be prouder of them and what we have accomplished over the almost 2 years that I've had the honor of serving in this position.

And as the President noted, I have today submitted my resignation as Secretary of Defense. It's been the greatest privilege of my life; the greatest privilege of my life to lead and, most important, to serve: to serve with the men and women of the Defense Department and support their families. I am immensely proud of what we've accomplished during this time. We have prepared ourselves—as the President has noted—our allies, and Afghan National Security Forces for successful transition in Afghanistan. We've bolstered enduring alliances and strengthened emerging partnerships while successfully responding to crises around the world.

And we've launched important reforms that the President noted, reforms that will prepare this institution for the challenges facing us in decades to come. I believe we have set not only this Department—the Department of Defense—but the Nation on a stronger course toward security, stability, and prosperity. If I didn't believe that, I would not have done this job.

As our country prepares to celebrate Thanksgiving, I want to—you, Mr. President, and you, Vice President Biden—acknowledge what you have done and how grateful I am to both of you for your leadership and your friendship and for giving me this opportunity to serve our country once again.

I will continue to support you, Mr. President, and the men and women who defend this country every day so unselfishly and their families, what they do for our country so unselfishly. And as I have said, and as the President noted, I will stay on this job and work just as hard as I have over the last couple of years, every day, every moment, until my successor is confirmed by the United States Senate.

I'd also like to express my gratitude to our colleagues on Capitol Hill, my gratitude to them for their support of me, but more importantly, their support of our troops, and their families and their continued commitment to our national security.

I also want to thank my international counterparts for their friendship and their partnership and their advice during my time as Secretary of Defense. Their involvement with me and their partnership with me, in so many of these important areas as we build these coalitions of common interests, as you have noted, Mr. President, are so critically important. And to them, I am grateful, I will be forever grateful.

And finally, I'd like to thank my family. My wife Lilibet, who you have mentioned, Mr. President, who was with me this morning as she has been with me throughout so many years and during so many tremendous

experiences. And this experience and opportunity and privilege to serve as Secretary of Defense has been one of those; and to my daughter Allyn and my son Ziller.

Mr. President, again, thank you. To you and to all of our team everywhere, and as we know, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, it is a team effort. And that's part of the fun of it, to help build teams and to work together to make things happen for the good of the country and make a better world. For all of that, I am immensely grateful. And to all of you, your families, happy Thanksgiving. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom
November 24, 2014

The President. Thank you so much. And, everybody, have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House. This is one of my favorite events. Once a year, we set aside this event to celebrate people who have made America stronger and wiser and more humane and more beautiful with our highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. This year we honor 18. Unfortunately, Stephen Sondheim could not be with us today. I'm going to be presenting him with this award at our 2015 ceremony.

We give thanks to public servants who have devoted their lives to their fellow citizens. When Edward Roybal told Speaker Tip O'Neill that he was starting a Congressional Hispanic Caucus, there were so few Hispanics in Congress that Tip joked they could fit the whole caucus in a phone booth. But Edward saw beyond the times.

As a Congressman from Los Angeles for 30 years, he fought for bilingual education, bilingual proceedings in our judicial system, and to make sure Hispanic Americans counted—literally. Thanks to him, the Caucus—the Census was revised to more accurately count Latinos. Although his roots in America went back hundreds of years, he championed the cause of immigrants and spoke up for vulnerable communities and was one of few in the early 1980s calling for more AIDS research. He left us nearly a decade ago, but Edward Roybal was and remains a hero to so many, not just Latinos, but all Americans.

Every girl in Little League, every woman playing college sports, and every parent—including Michelle and myself—who watches their daughter on a field or in the classroom is forever grateful to the late Patsy Takemoto Mink. I am particularly grateful because she was my Congresswoman for a long time. [*Laughter*]

Denied admission to medical school because she was a woman, Patsy went on to law school and coauthored title IX, banning gender discrimination in our schools. Patsy was many "firsts," including the first woman of color in Congress, and to those of us in Hawaii, she represented the very best of public service and the aloha spirit.

And if she was a first, she dedicated her life to making sure that she would not be the last. From championing civil rights to fighting for gender—fighting against gender discrimination, Patsy was a passionate advocate for opportunity, equality, and realizing the full promise of the American Dream.

When John Dingell's father, a New Deal Democrat, passed away in 1955, John stepped up. And over the course of six decades, a congressional career longer than any in history, John built a peerless record of his own. He gaveled in the vote for Medicare, helped lead the fight for the Civil Rights Act. For more than half a century, in every single Congress, John introduced a bill for comprehensive health care. That is, until he didn't have to do it anymore. [*Laughter*] And—[*applause*].

I could not have been prouder to have John by my side when I signed the Affordable Care Act into law. John will retire at the end of this

session, but at 88, he's still going strong. And his life reminds us that change takes time; it takes courage and persistence. But if we push hard enough and long enough, change is possible.

As a University of Chicago student, Abner Mikva stopped by the local Democratic headquarters and asked to volunteer. And I love this story. A committeeman asked, "Who sent you?" and Ab said, "Nobody." And the committeeman said, "We don't want nobody nobody sent." [*Laughter*] That's Chicago for you. [*Laughter*]

Despite that abrupt dismissal, Ab went on to devote his life to public service: reformed Illinois's criminal code, defended free speech and consumer rights; in 1993, stuck down—struck down the Pentagon's ban on gays in the military. He was overturned on that one, but history proved him right. And he inspired the next generation, including me.

After I graduated from law school, he offered me the chance to be his law clerk. I declined, but was extraordinarily grateful, and he forgave me—[*laughter*]—for which I was also grateful. Ab transcends any single moment in recent political history. But he had a hand in shaping some of the best of it. So we've got some extraordinary public servants on this stage.

We also give thanks for innovators who've changed our world. Mildred Dresselhaus's high school yearbook contained commentary from her classmates. They printed a mathematical tribute: "Mildred equals brains plus fun. In math and science, she's second to none." [*Laughter*]

Growing up in New York during the Great Depression, this daughter of Polish immigrants had three clear paths open to her: teaching, nursing, and secretarial school. Somehow, she had something else in mind. And she became an electrical engineer and a physicist and rose in MIT's ranks, performed groundbreaking experiments on carbon, became one of the world's most celebrated scientists. And her influence is all around us: in the cars we drive, the energy we generate, the electronic devices that power our lives. When she arrived at MIT in 1960, only 4 percent of students were women. Today, almost half are, a new generation walking the path that Millie blazed.

Robert Solow's father was a businessman who handled a lot of documents. And when Robert became an economist, his dad joked, we do the same thing: deliver papers. [*Laughter*] But Bob's influence extends far beyond the page. More than just about any living economist, he has shaped economic policy, and with it, the lives of people everywhere. His insights into how technological progress drives growth transformed our thinking about how to build prosperity, leading to more investments in research and education—in other words, more investments in people.

When he won the Nobel Prize, a colleague wrote, "Economists' faces lit up all over the world." And this isn't exactly an irrationally exuberant group, economists. [*Laughter*] They don't usually get real fired up. [*Laughter*] But Bob isn't just admired by his peers, he is adored. And he continues to be a leading voice on the economic challenges of our times, especially when it comes to reversing income inequality and growing the economy for everybody, always pushing our Nation to do better for everybody, for all.

So we give thanks to public servants, we give thanks to innovators, and we give thanks to performers who have captivated our hearts and our minds. The Onion once ran this headline: "Court Rules Meryl Streep Unable To Be Tried by Jury As She Has No Peers." [*Laughter*]

Now, I think this is, like, the third or fourth award Meryl's gotten since I've been in office, and I've said it publicly: I love Meryl Streep. I love her. Her husband knows I love her. Michelle knows I love her. There's nothing either of them can do about it. [*Laughter*]

But she's done it all for her craft. She's sung Abba, which, you know, that's something. [*Laughter*] She learned violin, wore a nun's habit, faced down a charging lion, mastered every accent under the Sun. She inhabits her characters so fully and compassionately, saying, "It's the greatest gift of human beings that we have this power of empathy."

And off screen, as an advocate for women and girls, she uses that gift to help others write

the life stories of their choosing and to encourage greater empathy in the rest of us. So Meryl is truly one of America's leading ladies.

And then there's Stevie. Don't get Michelle talking about Stevie Wonder now. [*Laughter*] Early copies of Stevie Wonder's classic album "Talking Book" had a simple message, written in Braille: "Here is my music. It is all I have to tell you how I feel. Know that your love keeps my love strong." This is, by the way, the first album I ever bought with my own money. I was 10 years old, maybe 11, with my own cash. I didn't have a lot of it. And I listened to that—that thing got so worn out, had all scratches. Young people, you won't remember this, but you'd have albums. [*Laughter*] And they'd get scratched.

For more than 50 years, Stevie has channeled his "Innervisions" into messages of hope and healing, in becoming one of the most influential musicians in American history. A musical prodigy with an electrifying voice, Stevie's blend of R&B and jazz and funk and blues and soul and whatever else you've got speaks of love and loss, justice and equality, war and peace. But what really defines Stevie's music is the warmth and humanity that resonates in every note. Some of his songs helped us to fall in love. Others mended our hearts. Some motivated us on the campaign trail. [*Laughter*] And thanks to Stevie, all of us have been moved to "Higher Ground."

Alvin Ailey was born during the Depression in small-town Texas. And by the time he was 27, he had founded a dance company of his own in New York City. It became a place where artists of all races had a home. All that mattered was talent. The dances he choreographed were a blend of ballet, modern, and jazz, and they used the blues and spirituals as well. And through him, African American history was told in a way that it had never been told before: with passionate, virtuoso dance performances that transfixed audiences worldwide.

Alvin said that "dance came from the people and that it should always be delivered back to the people." Alvin Ailey delivered, both through his life and through the dance company that will forever bear his name.

When Isabel Allende learned that her grandfather in Chile was dying, she started writing him a letter. Night after night, she returned to it, until, she realized, she was actually writing her first novel. She never really stopped. Her novels and memoirs tell of families, magic, romance, oppression, violence, redemption—all the big stuff. But in her hands, the big became graspable and familiar and human. And exiled from Chile by a military junta, she made the U.S. her home; today, the foundation she created to honor her late daughter helps families worldwide. She begins all her books on January 8, the day she began that letter to her grandfather years ago. "Write to register history," she says. "Write what should not be forgotten."

On the night that the Berlin Wall fell, only one American network anchor was there reporting live. A reporter remembers Ben Bradlee standing in the Post newsroom, watching Tom Brokaw at the Brandenburg Gate and wondering aloud, "How do we beat that?" [*Laughter*] "Brokaw's got this."

At pivotal moments, Tom got it. He reported on Watergate, snuck a camera into Tiananmen Square, sat down for the first one-on-one with Mikhail Gorbachev by an American TV reporter, covered every Presidential election since 1968. We've welcomed him into our home at dinnertime and Sunday mornings. We've trusted him to tell us what we needed to know and to ask questions that needed asking. I know, because I've been on the receiving end of some of those questions. [*Laughter*] Many of him know—many know him as the chronicler of the "Greatest Generation," and today we celebrate him as one of our Nation's greatest journalists.

And we give thanks to trailblazers who bent the arc of our Nation towards justice. In the 1950s, golfer Charlie Sifford won the Negro National Open five times in a row. But by the time he became the first African American to earn a PGA Tour card, most of his best golf was behind him.

On the tour, Charlie was sometimes banned from clubhouse restaurants. Folks threatened him, shouted slurs from the gallery, kicked his ball into the rough. Charlie's laughing about that—my ball is always in the rough. [*Laughter*]

And because golf can be a solitary sport, Charlie didn't have teammates to lean on. But he did have his lovely wife Rose. And he had plenty of guts and grit and that trademark cigar. And Charlie won on the Tour twice, both after age 45. But it was never just about the wins. As Charlie says, "I wasn't just trying to do this for me, I was trying to do it for the world."

Speaking of trailblazers, to some, Marlo Thomas will always be "That Girl," who followed her dreams to New York City and, kind of, was running around Manhattan, having fun, on her own terms. To others, she's the creative mind behind "Free to Be . . . You and Me," whose songs taught a generation of kids that they were strong and beautiful just the way they were.

As a founder of the "Ms. Foundation," Marlo helped turn women's hopes and aspirations into concrete social and economic progress. And she's helped build the hospital her father founded, St. Jude's, into one of the premier pediatric hospitals in the world. She recalls her dad saying: "There are two types of people in the world: the givers and the takers. The takers sometimes eat better, but the givers always sleep better." I love that saying. Marlo Thomas sleeps very well because she's given so much.

Raised on an Oklahoma reservation by a Cheyenne mother and a Hodulgee Muskogee father, Suzan Shown Harjo grew up to become one of the most effective advocates for Native American rights. And through her work in government and as the head of the National Congress of American Indians and the Morning Star Institute, she has helped preserve a million acres of Indian land, helped develop laws preserving tribal sovereignty. She has repatriated sacred cultural items to tribes, while expanding museums that celebrate Native life. Because of Suzan, more young Native Americans are growing up with pride in their heritage and with faith in their future. And she has taught all of us that Native values make American stronger.

On June 21, 1964, three young men—two White and one Black—set out to learn more about the burning of a church in Neshoba County, Mississippi: James Earl Chaney, 21 years old; Andrew Goodman, 20 years old; and Michael Henry Schwerner, 24 years old. Young men. And in that Freedom Summer, these three Americans refused to sit on the sidelines. Their brutal murder by a gang of Ku Klux Klan members shook the conscience of our Nation. It took 44 days to find their bodies, 41 years to bring the lead perpetrator to justice.

And while they are often remembered for how they died, we honor them today for how they lived: with the idealism and the courage of youth. James, Andrew, and Michael could not have known the impact they would have on the civil rights movement or on future generations. And here today, inspired by their sacrifice, we continue to fight for the ideals of equality and justice for which they gave their lives. Today we are honored to be joined by James's daughter Angela, Andrew's brother David, and Michael's wife Rita.

And finally, we give thanks to a person whose love for her family is matched by her devotion to her Nation. To most Americans, Ethel Kennedy is known as a wife, mother, and grandma. And in many ways, it's through these roles that she's made her mark on history. As Bobby Kennedy's partner in life, she shared his commitment to justice. After his death, she continued their work through the center she created in his name, celebrating activists and journalists and educating people around the world about threats to human liberty.

On urgent human rights issues of our time, from juvenile justice to environmental destruction, Ethel has been a force for change in her quiet, flashy—unflashy, unstoppable way. As her family will tell you, and they basically occupy this half of the room—[*laughter*]—you don't mess with Ethel. [*Laughter*]

She's gone to extraordinary lengths to build support for the causes close to her heart, including helping to raise money for ALS

research this summer by pouring a bucket of ice water over her head. [*Laughter*] As you may know, she nominated me to do it as well. And as you may know, I chose to write a check instead. [*Laughter*] I grew up in Hawaii. I don't like pouring ice water on top of my head. [*Laughter*] That is probably the only time I've ever said no to Ethel, by the way. [*Laughter*]

Ethel is the matriarch of a patriotic family, and with her encouragement, many of her children and grandchildren are carrying on the Kennedy tradition of public service. She is an emblem of enduring faith and enduring hope, even in the face of unimaginable loss and unimaginable grief. And she has touched the lives of countless people around the world with her generosity and her grace. It gives me great pleasure to present this award, which her brother-in-law, President Kennedy, reestablished more than 50 years ago.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are the recipients of the 2014 President Medal of Freedom. Let's give them a big round of applause. [*Applause*] Yay!

Well, you don't just get applause. You actually get a medal. [*Laughter*] So the—let's read the citations.

[*At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Jillian C. Malzone, USCG, Coast Guard Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals, assisted by Maj. Matthew R. Newell, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President.*]

The President. Well, what an extraordinary group. Let's give them all a big round of applause one more time.

We thank all of them for the gifts they've given to us: the incredible performances, the incredible innovation, the incredible ideas, the incredible expressions of the human spirit. And not only have they made the world better, but by following their example, they make us a little bit better every single day.

We are truly grateful to them. And on behalf of Michelle and myself, please enjoy the reception. And God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim; former White House Counsel Abner J. Mikva; Robert M. Solow, professor emeritus of economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Don Gummer, husband of actor Meryl Streep; Tom Brokaw, special correspondent, NBC News; former President Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev of the Soviet Union; Edgar Ray Killen, who was convicted of manslaughter in the deaths of Michael H. Schwerner, James E. Chaney, and Andrew Goodman on June 21, 2005; Angela Lewis, daughter of Mr. Chaney; and Rita Schwerner-Bender, wife of Mr. Schwerner. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citations.

Remarks on the Situation in Ferguson, Missouri, and an Exchange With Reporters

November 24, 2014

The President. Good evening, everybody. As all of you know, a few moments ago, the grand jury deliberating the death of Michael Brown issued its decision. It's an outcome that, either way, was going to be subject of intense disagreement not only in Ferguson, but across America. So I want to just say a few words suggesting how we might move forward.

First and foremost, we are a nation built on the rule of law. And so we need to accept that this decision was the grand jury's to make. There are Americans who agree with it, and there are Americans who are deeply disappointed, even angry. It's an understandable reaction. But I join Michael's parents in asking anyone who protests this decision to do so peacefully. Let me repeat Michael's father's words: "Hurting others or destroying property is not the answer. No matter what the grand jury decides, I do not want my son's death to be in vain. I want it to lead to incredible change, positive change, change that makes

the St. Louis region better for everyone." Now, Michael Brown's parents have lost more than anyone. We should be honoring their wishes.

I also appeal to the law enforcement officials in Ferguson and the region to show care and restraint in managing peaceful protests that may occur. Understand, our police officers put their lives on the line for us every single day. They've got a tough job to do to maintain public safety and hold accountable those who break the law. As they do their jobs in the coming days, they need to work with the community, not against the community, to distinguish the handful of people who may use the grand jury's decision as an excuse for violence—distinguish them from the vast majority who just want their voices heard around legitimate issues in terms of how communities and law enforcement interact.

Finally, we need to recognize that the situation in Ferguson speaks to broader challenges that we still face as a nation. The fact is, in too many parts of this country, a deep distrust exists between law enforcement and communities of color. Some of this is the result of the legacy of racial discrimination in this country. And this is tragic, because nobody needs good policing more than poor communities with higher crime rates. The good news is, we know there are things we can do to help. And I've instructed Attorney General Holder to work with cities across the country to help build better relations between communities and law enforcement.

That means working with law enforcement officials to make sure their ranks are representative of the communities they serve. We know that makes a difference. It means working to train officials so that law enforcement conducts itself in a way that is fair to everybody. It means enlisting the community actively on what should be everybody's goal, and that is to prevent crime.

And there are good people on all sides of this debate, as well as in both Republican and Democratic parties, that are interested not only in lifting up best practices with—because we know that there are communities who have been able to deal with this in an effective way—but also who are interested in working with this administration and local and State officials to start tackling much-needed criminal justice reform.

So those should be the lessons that we draw from these tragic events. We need to recognize that this is not just an issue for Ferguson, this is an issue for America. We have made enormous progress in race relations over the course of the past several decades. I have witnessed that in my own life. And to deny that progress, I think, is to deny America's capacity for change.

But what is also true is that there are still problems, and communities of color aren't just making these problems up. Separating that from this particular decision, there are issues in which the law too often feels as if it is being applied in discriminatory fashion. I don't think that's the norm. I don't think that's true for the majority of communities or the vast majority of law enforcement officials. But these are real issues. And we have to lift them up and not deny them or try to tamp them down. What we need to do is to understand them and figure out how do we make more progress. And that can be done.

That won't be done by throwing bottles. That won't be done by smashing car windows. That won't be done by using this as an excuse to vandalize property. And it certainly won't be done by hurting anybody. So to those in Ferguson, there are ways of channeling your concerns constructively, and there are ways of channeling your concerns destructively. And Michael Brown's parents understand what it means to be constructive. The vast majority of peaceful protesters, they understand it as well.

Those of you who are watching tonight, understand that there's never an excuse for violence, particularly when there are a lot of people in goodwill out there who are willing to work on these issues.

On the other hand, those who are only interested in focusing on the violence and just want the problem to go away need to recognize that we do have work to do here and we shouldn't try to paper it over. Whenever we do that, the anger may momentarily subside, but over time, it builds up, and America isn't everything that it could be.

And I am confident that if we focus our attention on the problem and we look at what has happened in communities around the country effectively, then we can make progress not just in Ferguson, but in a lot of other cities and communities around the country.

Okay?

Federal Role in Ferguson, Missouri/Media Coverage

Q. Mr. President, will you go to Ferguson when things settle down there?

The President. Well, let's take a look and see how things are going. Eric Holder has been there. We've had a whole team from the Justice Department there, and I think that they have done some very good work. As I said, the vast majority of the community has been working very hard to try to make sure that this becomes an opportunity for us to seize the moment and turn this into a positive situation.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. But I think that we have to make sure that we focus at least as much attention on all those positive activities that are taking place as we do on a handful of folks who end up using this as an excuse to misbehave or to break the law or to engage in violence.

Q. Are Federal——

The President. I think that it's going to be very important—and I think the media is going to have a responsibility as well—to make sure that we focus on Michael Brown's parents and the clergy and the community leaders and the civil rights leaders and the activists and law enforcement officials who have been working very hard to try to find better solutions, long-term solutions, to this issue.

There is inevitably going to be some negative reaction, and it will make for good TV. But what we want to do is to make sure that we're also focusing on those who can offer the kind of real progress that we know is possible, that the vast majority of people in Ferguson, the St. Louis region, in Missouri, and around the country are looking for. And I want to be partners with those folks. And we need to lift up that kind of constructive dialogue that's taking place.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:08 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Brown, Sr., and Lesley McSpadden, parents of Michael Brown, who was shot by a police officer in Ferguson, MO, on August 9.

Remarks in Chicago, Illinois
November 25, 2014

The President. Hello, Chicago. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. Thank you. Thank you very much. Happy early Thanksgiving, everybody. It is good to be home. Although, it's cold in Chicago. [*Laughter*] It was 60 degrees in Washington. It's not 60 degrees here. [*Laughter*]

Let me begin by thanking the Copernicus Center. *Dzien dobry* to everybody. We appreciate you. Thank you so much.

Situation in Ferguson, Missouri/Public Response to Grand Jury Decision/Law Enforcement Reform Efforts

I hope you don't mind—because obviously, there's a lot of stuff in the news—I actually need to begin by saying a few words about what's happened over the past day, not just in Ferguson, Missouri, our neighbor to the south, but all across America.

As many of you know, a verdict came down—or a grand jury made a decision yesterday that upset a lot of people. And as I said last night, the frustrations that we've seen are not just about a particular incident. They have deep roots in many communities of color who have a sense that our laws are not always being enforced uniformly or fairly. That may not be true everywhere, and it's certainly not true for the vast majority of law enforcement officials, but that's an impression that folks have, and it's not just made up. It's rooted in realities

that have existed in this country for a long time.

Now, as I said last night, there are productive ways of responding and expressing those frustrations, and there are destructive ways of responding. Burning buildings, torching cars, destroying property, putting people at risk—that's destructive, and there's no excuse for it. Those are criminal acts, and people should be prosecuted if they engage in criminal acts.

But what we also saw—although, it didn't get as much attention in the media—was people gathering in overwhelmingly peaceful protest, here in Chicago, in New York, in Los Angeles, other cities. We've seen young people who were organizing and people beginning to have real conversations about how do we change the situation so that there's more trust between law enforcement and some of these communities. And those are necessary conversations to have.

We're here to talk about immigration, but part of what makes America this remarkable place is, being American doesn't mean you have to look a certain way or have a certain last name or come from a certain place; it has to do with a commitment to ideals, a belief in certain values. And if any part of the American community doesn't feel welcomed or treated fairly, that's something that puts all of us at risk, and we all have to be concerned about it.

So my message to those people who are constructively moving forward, trying to organize, mobilize, and ask hard, important questions about how we improve the situation, I want all those folks to know that their President is going to work with them. And I think you'll find a lot of—[*applause*]. Separate and apart from the particular circumstances in Ferguson, which I've—I am careful not to speak to because it's not my job as President to comment on ongoing investigations and specific cases, but the frustrations people have generally, those are rooted in some hard truths that have to be addressed.

And so I—those who are prepared to work constructively, your President will work with you. And a lot of folks, I believe, in law enforcement and a lot of folks in city halls and Governor's offices across the country want to work with you as well.

So, as part of that, I've instructed Attorney General Eric Holder not just to investigate what happened in Ferguson, but also identify specific steps we can take together to set up a series of regional meetings focused on building trust in our communities. And next week, we'll bring together State and local officials and law enforcement and community leaders and faith leaders to start identifying very specific steps that we can take to make sure that law enforcement is fair and is being applied equally to every person in this country.

And we know certain things work. We know that if we train police properly, that that improves policing and makes people feel that the system is fair. We know that when we have a police force that is representative of the communities it's serving, that makes a difference. And we know that when there's clear accountability and transparency when something happens, that makes a difference. So there are specific things we can do, and the key now is for us to lift up the best practices and work, city by city, State by State, county by county, all across this country, because the problem is not just a Ferguson problem, it is an American problem. And we've got to make sure that we are actually bringing about change.

The bottom line is, nothing of significance, nothing of benefit results from destructive acts. I've never seen a civil rights law or a health care bill or an immigration bill result because a car got burned. It happened because people vote. It happened because people mobilize. It happened because people organize. It happens because people look at what are the best policies to solve the problem. That's how you actually move something forward.

So don't take the short-term, easy route and just engage in destructive behavior. Take the long-term, hard, but lasting route of working with me and Governors and State officials to bring about some real change.

And to those who think that what happened in Ferguson is an excuse for violence, I do not have any sympathy for that. I have no sympathy at all for destroying your own communities.

But for the overwhelming majority of people who just feel frustrated and pained because they get a sense that maybe some communities aren't treated fairly or some individuals aren't seen as worthy as others, I understand that. And I want to work with you, and I want to move forward with you. Your President will be right there with you.

Audience member. Thank you, Mr. President!

The President. All right? So that's what we need to focus on. Let's be constructive.

Immigration Reform

Now, I appreciate your patience, because I know you came here to talk about immigration. But this is relevant, because part of what America is about is stitching together folks from different backgrounds and different faiths and different ethnicities. That's what makes us special. And look, let's face it, sometimes, that's hard. Sometimes, that's hard to do. But it's worthwhile; it's worth doing.

If you go to—I was just traveling in Asia—you go to Japan, they don't have problems with certain folks being discriminated against because mostly everybody is Japanese. [*Laughter*] You know? I mean—but here, part of what's wonderful about America is also what makes our democracy hard sometimes, because sometimes, we get attached to our particular tribe, our particular race, our particular religion, and then we start treating other folks differently.

And that sometimes has been a bottleneck to how we think about immigration. If you look at the history of immigration in this country, each successive wave, there have been periods where the folks who were already here suddenly say, well, I don't want those folks. Even though the only people who have the right to say that are some Native Americans.

Now, it is fitting that I've come here, back home to Chicago. Because Chicago has always been a city of immigrants. And that's still true in the neighborhoods that define this city. Especially on the North Side up here. I mean, there's—[*laughter*]—we've got everything up here. [*Laughter*]

No, you go to the public schools around here, and you've got 50, 60, 70 different languages being spoken. From Andersonville to Chinatown, from Devon to Greektown, Pilsen, Ukrainian Village, immigrants have made this "City of Broad Shoulders" their home. We are Swedish and Polish and German and Italian. Everybody is Irish on St. Patrick's Day. [*Laughter*]

We've got names like Pat Quinn, our Governor, and Luis Gutierrez, our Congressman; Jan Schakowsky, another Congresswoman; Brad Schneider, Congressman; Rahm Emanuel—[*applause*]. All mixed up. [*Laughter*] I don't mean Rahm. I mean all of us, together. [*Laughter*] It is true that Rahm speaks a language that can't be translated in front of children. [*Laughter*] Although, he's a mayor now, so he doesn't do that anymore, I'm sure. [*Laughter*]

Anyone who's driven along the Kennedy has seen the silhouettes of steeples jabbing at the sky, steeples as diverse as the houses of worship that they belong to and the immigrants that built them and the communities who call those neighborhoods home to this day.

Today we're here at a Polish community center, and I just—I was just meeting with a group of Chicago's business and civic leaders, representing people who come here from Mexico and China and Poland and Ireland.

You just heard Billy Lawless, who was a successful business owner back in Galway. But he says—and I'm quoting here—"I had a thing for the United States. I always wanted to see if I could hack it with you guys." And so, 16 years ago, Billy comes to Chicago, opens up an Irish pub, because there was a shortage of Irish pubs in Chicago, clearly. [*Laughter*] Then, he opened another restaurant, then another, and then another. And, 4 months ago, Billy and his wife became American citizens, and they voted for the very first time as Americans on November 4. And you can often find their son, also named Billy, charming the heck out of customers at all hours of the day and night. Together, they've gone from employing 10 workers to employing more than 250 workers.

And you just heard what Billy said: "This is what we immigrants do." One study a few years ago found that immigrants start more than a

quarter of all new businesses in the United States—one-quarter of them. Another study found that immigrants and their children start over 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies. Think about that. But it makes sense, because being a nation of immigrants gives us this huge entrepreneurial advantage over other nations. If you were willing to strike out, go to someplace new, build from scratch, you've got that sense of being willing to take risks and being able to build something from scratch; you have that spirit. That's part of what the American spirit is all about. It's part of what drove us westward across the frontier, not feeling like what's in front of you is the only thing that's possible, but that something else is possible.

And because of those businesses started by immigrants, we all benefit. It means more jobs. It means more growth for everybody.

Now, as I said last week, our immigration system has been broken for a long time. Families who try to come here the right way can get stuck in line for years. Business owners who treat their employees right often see the competition exploit undocumented workers to undercut businesses. All of us, I think, don't like the idea that somebody can reap the rewards of living in America without its responsibilities. And there are people who desperately want to embrace those responsibilities, but they have no way of coming out of the shadows and getting right with the law. So everybody is stuck with a system that doesn't work for anybody.

Now, a year and a half ago, we had a big majority—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—in the United States Senate, and they came together, they passed a bipartisan bill to fix this broken system. And the bill wasn't perfect. It didn't have everything I wanted; it didn't have everything that everybody—anybody wanted. But it did reflect common sense. It was this huge improvement.

We would have doubled the number of Border Patrol agents. So, if you are concerned about illegal migration, it would have made our borders that much tougher. It would have made our legal immigration system smarter and fairer and reduce some of the backlog that hampers families from getting here. It would have given millions of people a chance to earn their citizenship the right way. And independent experts said that, over the next two decades, the new law would grow our economy and shrink our deficit.

And had the House of Representatives allowed a simple yes or no vote on that kind of bill, it would have passed. That's all they needed to do, just call the bill. It would be law right now. We'd be well on our way to solving the problems in the system. I'd be implementing those provisions. But, for a year and a half, over 500 days, Republican leaders in the House simply refused to allow a vote. They wouldn't let it come to the floor.

Now, I still believe the best way to solve this problem is by working together to pass that kind of commonsense law. When I was talking to Billy and the other civic leaders, there were things that can only be solved by Congress. But until then, there are actions I have the legal authority to take that will help make our immigration system more fair and more just. And I took them last week. They were the right thing to do.

So we're devoting more resources for law enforcement to stem the flow of illegal crossings at the borders and to speed the return of those who do cross over. We're initiating smarter reforms so high-skilled immigrants and graduates and entrepreneurs can stay and contribute to our economy. And I'm taking new steps to deal responsibly with the millions of undocumented immigrants who already live here, including here in Chicago.

Now, I've said this before, so I just want to be clear, and I say it in front of immigrant rights groups all the time: Undocumented workers who broke our immigration laws should be held accountable. There's a particular category, and that's those who may be dangerous. It's a small minority, but it's a significant one. And that's why, over the past 6 years, deportations of criminals are up 80 percent. And we'll keep focusing our limited enforcement resources on those who actually pose a threat to our security. Felons, not families. Gangs, not some mom or dad who are working

hard just trying to make a better life for their kids.

But even——

Audience member. Sorry, Mr. President, but that has been a lie. You have been deporting families——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. All right. Okay.

Audience member. I will never thank you for continuing deportation——

The President. All right. That's fine. You've made your point. All right.

Audience member. Sit down!

Audience member. Not one more! Stop deportations!

Audience member. Not one more!

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]—to a lot of people that you did not take into account. [*Inaudible*]—and going into our communities and labeling people with families as criminals. And that is not the truth! You cannot keep saying felons, not families.

The President. Okay, I've heard you. All right.

Audience member. Republicans are also not the only ones playing. You've got Rahm Emanuel over there who advised against reform.

The President. Okay.

Audience member. Republicans are also not the only ones playing. [*Inaudible*]—deportations.

The President. I understand. The——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Listen, hold on. Hold on. Hold on. Young lady. Don't just start yelling, young ladies. Sir, why don't you sit down too. Listen——

Audience member. There is no justice anywhere——

The President. The—here, can I just say this? All right, I've listened to you. I heard you. I heard you. I heard you. All right? Now, I've been respectful. I let you holler. All right? So let me just—let me—[*applause*]. Nobody is removing you. I've heard you. But you've got to listen to me too. All right? So—[*applause*]. And I understand you may agree—disagree. I understand you may disagree. But we've got to be able to talk honestly about these issues. All right?

Now, you're absolutely right that there have been significant numbers of deportations. That's true. But what you're not paying attention to is the fact that I just took action to change the law. Now—[*applause*]. So that's point number one.

Point number two: The way the change in the law works is that we're reprioritizing how we enforce our immigration laws generally. So not everybody qualifies for being able to sign up and register, but the change in priorities applies to everybody.

The point is that, though I understand why you might have yelled at me a month ago—[*laughter*]—although, I disagree with some of your characterizations—it doesn't make much sense to yell at me right now, when we're making changes.

So the point is—but the point is, let's make sure that you get the facts and that you know exactly what we're doing. And then if you have disagreements, then you can work through all the immigrant rights organizations that we work with to try to address some of your concerns. Right? So—[*applause*].

But what—[*laughter*]—but here's what won't work. What won't work is folks—what won't work is folks just shouting at each other. All right? So I've been respectful. I responded to your question. I'd ask you now to let me speak to all the other people who are here. All right? Okay.

Now—[*applause*].

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Okay. It's good to be back in Chicago. [*Laughter*] So—because everybody has got something to say. But I'm not going to be able to have a conversation with each of you separately. [*Laughter*] So there are other ways of engaging. Just sit down. I just went off script for a pretty long time. [*Laughter*] I don't mind. I know people are passionate about this. But be respectful of everybody who's here. All right?

Now, let me get to the point that I was making, which is, even if we deported all the crimi-

nals, folks who had actually done bad things, there are millions of people here who are good people, but have still broken the immigration laws. And they're found in every State, every race, every nationality. Tracking down and rounding up and deporting millions of people is not realistic. It's not who we are. It's not what America should be.

On the other hand—and this sometimes is not acknowledged—if you came here illegally, you are cutting in front of the line of the folks who were trying to come here legally, which also is not fair. That's not fair. That doesn't make people bad people. But it does mean that you cut in front of the line, because there are a lot of folks who are waiting to try to get here legally.

So the deal that we're putting forward is this: If you've been here for more than 5 years, if you have children who are citizens or legal residents, if you register and pass a criminal background check and pay your fair share of taxes, then you can apply to stay temporarily. You can come out of the shadows. You can get right with the law.

This isn't amnesty or legalization or even a pathway to citizenship, because that's not something I can do. That is something only Congress can do. It also doesn't apply to anyone who has come to this country recently or might come illegally in the future, because borders do mean something. So it's accountability. It's a commonsense approach that allows me to exercise legal authorities that I have in order to make sure that we're preventing families from being broken apart.

And I am the first one to acknowledge that part of the reason that this has become important to me is, you're right, there have been times where families got broken apart, while I've been President. And it's heartbreaking. And it's not right. So, until Congress does a complete fix, what we're saying is, if you have deep ties here and you start paying your fair share of taxes, then we won't deport you and separate you from your kids.

And we will not—[*applause*]. And even if you do not fully qualify, we will still try to reprioritize how we're enforcing the laws—which we have to do—in a way that is less likely to break families apart. Because the system is broken.

And one of the reasons why this is important is because immigrants are good for the economy. We keep on hearing that they're bad. But a report by my Council of Economic Advisers put out last week shows how the actions we're taking will grow our economy for everybody. By 2024, the actions that I'm taking will add at least $90 billion to our gross domestic product. And this economic growth will reduce our deficit by $25 billion. And these actions will grow our labor force by nearly 150,000 people, and they will boost wages for American-born workers.

Now, if we passed a comprehensive law, it would be even better. We'd grow even faster, and the deficit would come down even faster. But even the steps we're taking now will make a difference.

And these actions are lawful. They're not only lawful, they're the kinds of actions that have been taken by every President for the past 50 years. When I hear some of my Republican friends talk about this, I try to remind them: President Reagan took action to keep families together. The first President Bush took action to shield about 1.5 million people. That was about 40 percent of undocumented immigrants in America at the time.

So, when folks in Congress question my authority to make our immigration system work better, I've one answer: Pass a bill. Pass a bill. [*Applause*] Go ahead and pass a bill. I want to work with both parties on a more permanent legislative solution. I know that's what Luis Gutierrez wants and Jan Schakowski wants and Brad Schneider wants. They've been at the forefront fighting for a more permanent solution. And the day I sign a comprehensive immigration bill into law, then the actions I take will no longer be necessary.

But in the meantime, I'm going to do what I can to make this system work better. And in the meantime, Washington shouldn't let disagreements over one issue be a deal breaker on every issue. That's not how our democracy works. You can't disagree with one thing and then just say, all right, I'm going to take my ball

away and go home. [*Laughter*] And Congress certainly should not shut down the Government again over this. Americans are tired of gridlock. We're ready to move forward.

As you can imagine, I've gotten a lot of letters and a lot of e-mails about immigration over the past few days. And some have said it was a mistake for me to act. But then, others remind me why I had to. One letter I got last week came from Brett Duncan of Dawsonville, Georgia. And Brett is a Republican, and so he doesn't really agree with me about anything. [*Laughter*] Well, maybe everything. His ancestors came over from Scotland before the Civil War, so his immigration status is pretty much settled. [*Laughter*] But he's done missionary work overseas. He knows what it's like to be a stranger. And over the years, he's gotten to know a lot of the new immigrants in his community. And here's what he said. He said: "Their children are as American as I am. It would be senseless to deport their parents. It would be bad for America." "I believe," Brett wrote, "that a human being, created in the very image of Almighty God, is the greatest resource we have in this country."

So we're not a nation that kicks out strivers and dreamers who want to earn their piece of the American Dream. We are a nation that fundamentally is strong, is special, is exceptional, because we find ways to welcome people, fellow human beings, childrens of God, into the fold, and harness their talents to make the future brighter for everybody.

We didn't raise the Statue of Liberty with her back to the world. We did it facing the world, her light, her beacon shining. And whether we are—whether we crossed the Atlantic or the Pacific or the Rio Grande, we all shared one thing, and that's the hope that America would be the place where we could believe as we choose and pray as we choose and start a business without paying a bribe or—and that we could vote in an election without fearing reprisal and that the law would be enforced equally for everybody, regardless of what you looked like and what your last name was.

That's the ideal that binds us all together. That's what's at stake when we have conversations about immigration. That's what's at stake when we have conversations about Ferguson: Are we going to live up to those ideals of who we are as a people? And it falls on all of us to hand down to our kids a country that lives up to that promise, where America is the place where we can make it if we try.

So thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:05 p.m. at the Copernicus Center. In his remarks, he referred to restaurateur Billy Lawless, cofounder, Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform and Illinois Business Immigration Coalition, and vice president, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, who introduced the President; and Anne Lawless, wife of Mr. Lawless. He also referred to S. 744. The related memorandums of November 21 are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony
November 26, 2014

The President. Good afternoon, everybody.

Audience members. Good afternoon.

The President. Please have a seat. Normally, we do this outside. The weather is not cooperating today. But I want to, first of all, on behalf of Malia and Sasha, wish everybody an early happy Thanksgiving. I am here to announce what I'm sure will be the most talked about executive action this month. Today I'm taking an action, fully within my legal authority—[*laughter*]—the same kind of action taken by Democrats and Republican Presidents before me—to spare the lives of two turkeys, Mac and Cheese, from a terrible and delicious fate. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Joel Brandenberger, the president of the National Turkey Federation; Gary Cooper, its chairman; and his son Cole Cooper, who personally raised Mac and

Cheese. Give them a big round of applause for—[*applause*]. Cole is keeping a pretty careful eye there on Cheese. [*Laughter*] Uh-oh, he's not—he's getting pretty excited about this.

Thanks to all those who voted online to pick the official National Thanksgiving Turkey. Cheese wants you to know that he won. [*Laughter*] Mac, the alternate, is not so badly off either. Let's face it, if you're a turkey, and you're named after a side dish—[*laughter*]—your chances of escaping Thanksgiving dinner are pretty low. So these guys are well ahead of the curve. They really beat the odds.

It is important to know that turkeys have always had powerful allies. Many of you know that Benjamin Franklin once wrote: "I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country. He is a bird of bad moral character. . . . The turkey is, in comparison, a much more respectable bird." [*Laughter*] I think these two turkeys would agree with Mr. Franklin. And they'll get to live out the rest of their days, respectably, at a Virginia estate with 10,000 [1,000]* acres of roaming space.

I know some will call this amnesty—[*laughter*]—but don't worry, there's plenty of turkey to go around. [*Laughter*] In fact, later this afternoon Michelle, Malia, and Sasha and I will take two turkeys that didn't make the cut to a local food pantry that works hard year round to make sure that folks in our Nation's Capital have food and clothes—food to eat and clothes to wear. I want to thank Jaindl Turkey Farm in Pennsylvania for donating, once again, those birds for—it's, in fact, been 6 years in a row that they've made these contributions—and for making Thanksgiving dinner possible for some of our fellow Americans.

Finally, the Washington Post recently questioned the wisdom of the whole turkey pardon tradition. "Typically, on the day before Thanksgiving," the story went, "the man who makes decisions about wars, virus outbreaks, terrorism cells, and other dire matters of state, chooses to pardon a single turkey, plus an alternate."

Tell me about it. It is a little puzzling that I do this every day—every year. [*Laughter*] But I will say that I enjoy it because, with all the tough stuff that swirls around in this office, it's nice, once in a while, just to say: Happy Thanksgiving. And this is a great excuse to do it.

Tomorrow is a pretty special moment when we give thanks for the people we love, and where we're mindful of the incredible blessings that we have received. We remember the folks who can't spend their holiday at home, especially the brave men and women in uniform who help keep our country secure. And we celebrate a holiday that, at its best, is about what makes this Nation great, and that's its generosity and its openness and, as President Franklin Roosevelt once said, our commitment to make a country in which no one is left out.

Now, because I know everyone wants to get out of town, Mac and Cheese included—[*laughter*]—it is time for me to engage in the official act. So let's see what we can do here with Cheese.

Careful there! Careful, Cole.

Come on, girls. [*Laughter*] Don't, don't. Come on. They always keep a little bit of a distance. You've got to be right next to him. All right, are we ready? All right? Cheese, you are hereby pardoned from the Thanksgiving dinner table. [*Laughter*] Congratulations. Gobble, gobble.

He looks pretty happy about it. [*Laughter*] All right, if you want to take Cheese down, that's okay. [*Laughter*] He—I will tell you, though, turkeys don't have the best looking heads. [*Laughter*] You know what I'm saying?

Cole Cooper. They're beautiful.

The President. You think they're beautiful?

Cole Cooper. I think they're beautiful.

Gary Cooper. And if you think about it, they're red, white, and blue, so they're American and patriotic too.

The President. There's a patriotism element to it. [*Laughter*] Absolutely. You guys want to pet him?

Malia Obama. No. [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you. How you doing? Good to see you. Appreciate you. Thank you, everybody. Happy Thanksgiving.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:32 p.m. in the Cross Hall at the White House.

* White House correction.

The President's Weekly Address
November 27, 2014

On behalf of the Obama family—Michelle, Malia, Sasha, Bo, and Sunny—I want to wish you a very happy Thanksgiving. Like many of you, we'll spend the day with family and friends, catching up, eating some good food, and watching a little football. Before we lift a fork, we lend a hand by going out to the community to serve some of our neighbors in need. And we give thanks for each other and for all of God's blessings.

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday because, more than any other, it is uniquely American. Each of us brings our own traditions and cultures and recipes to the table, but we all share this day, united by the gratitude for the bounty of this Nation. And we welcome the contributions of all people—no matter their origin or color or beliefs—who call America home and who enrich the life of our Nation. It is a creed as old as our founding: "E pluribus unum"—that out of many, we are one.

We're reminded that this creed, and America itself, was never an inevitability, but the result of ordinary people in every generation doing their part to uphold our founding ideals, by taking the blessings of freedom and multiplying them for those who would follow. As President Kennedy once wrote, even as we give thanks for all that we've inherited from those who came before us, "the decency of purpose, steadfastness of resolve and strength of will, for the courage and the humility, which they possessed," we must also remember that "the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

Today we are grateful to all Americans who do their part to live by those ideals, including our brave men and women in uniform overseas and their families, who sacrifice so much to keep America safe. To our servicemembers who are away from home, we say an extra prayer for you and your loved ones, and we renew our commitment to take care of you as well as you've taken care of us.

We're grateful to the countless Americans who serve their communities in soup kitchens and shelters, looking out for those who are less fortunate and lifting up those who have fallen on hard times. This generosity, this compassion, this belief that we are each other's keepers, is essential to who we are, not just on this day, but every day.

You know, it's easy to focus on what separates us. But as we gather with loved ones on this Thanksgiving, let's remember and be grateful for what binds us together: our love of country, our commitment to justice and equality, our belief that America's best days are ahead and that her destiny is ours to shape and that our inherited ideals must be the birthright of all of our children.

That's what today is all about: that out of many, we are one. So thank you, God bless you, and from my family to yours, happy Thanksgiving.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:25 p.m. on November 26 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on November 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 26, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 27.

Remarks Following a Meeting on Strengthening Relations Between Law Enforcement and Local Communities
December 1, 2014

As I said last week in the wake of the grand jury decision, I think Ferguson laid bare a problem that is not unique to St. Louis or that area and is not unique to our time, and that is, a simmering distrust that exists between too many police departments and too many com-

munities of color. The sense that in a country where one of our basic principles, perhaps the most important principle, is equality under the law, that too many individuals, particularly young people of color, do not feel as if they are being treated fairly.

And as I said last week, when any part of the American family does not feel like it is being treated fairly, that's a problem for all of us. It's not just a problem for some. It's not just a problem for a particular community or a particular demographic. It means that we are not as strong as a country as we can be. And when applied to the criminal justice system, it means we're not as effective in fighting crime as we could be.

And as a consequence, what I've been able to do today, thanks to excellent work by Eric Holder, our Attorney General, who had to fly down to Atlanta to start a conversation down there around these issues, as well as the outstanding leaders around this table, is to begin a process in which we're able to surface an honest conversation between law enforcement, community activists, academics, elected officials, the faith community, to try to determine what the problems are and, most importantly, try to come up with concrete solutions that can move the ball forward.

And one of the most powerful things that happened today was I had the opportunity to meet with some young people, including a couple of young outstanding leaders from the Ferguson community, Brittany Packnett and Rasheen Aldridge, who both served on the Ferguson committee, live in the area, and I think have been hearing from a lot of young people in that area.

And what made me concerned was the degree to which they feel as if they are not heard or that the reality of what they experienced has been denied. What made me greatly encouraged was how clear their voices were when they were heard and how constructive they are in wanting to solve these problems. And I think anybody who had the chance to listen to them here today felt the same way.

We also heard from law enforcement and were reminded of what a tough job it is to be in law enforcement. Whether you're in a big city or in a small community, as Eric Holder put it, police officers have the right to come home. And if they're in dangerous circumstances, we have to be able to put ourselves in their shoes and recognize that they do have a tough job. I don't think those realities are irreconcilable. In fact, I'm convinced that if we work hard, that we can make sure that police officers and the communities they serve are partners in battling crime, partners in making sure everybody feels safe; that we can build confidence and we can build trust, but it's not going to happen overnight, and it's not going to result just from a conversation around a table in Washington. It's got to result in concrete steps that we are able to lift up in communities all around the country and institutionalize.

In order to advance that goal, here are a couple of specific steps that we're taking. First of all, I want to thank Chuck Ramsey, the Commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department, as well as Laurie Robinson, who is a professor of criminology, law, and society at George Mason University and a former Assistant U.S.—a former Assistant Attorney General.

They are going to cochair a Task Force that is not only going to reach out and listen to law enforcement and community activists and other stakeholders, but is going to report to me specifically in 90 days with concrete recommendations, including best practices for communities where law enforcement and neighborhoods are working well together: How do they create accountability, how do they create transparency, how do they create trust, and how can we at the Federal level work with the State and local communities to make sure that some of those best practices get institutionalized?

So this is not going to be an endless report that ends up collecting dust on a shelf. My expectation is concrete recommendations that we can begin to operationalize both at the Federal, State, and local levels. And the good news is, is that we've got two folks who are respected by activists and respected by law enforcement, and I'm confident they're going to do an outstanding job. I want them to help us make sure

that crime continues to go down and while community trust in the police goes up.

Second, one of the issues that came up during the response to the—Ferguson back in August was the issue of military equipment being utilized in the face of protests that may be taking place in the community. It raised a broader issue as to whether we are militarizing domestic law enforcement unnecessarily, and is the Federal Government facilitating that?

I have now received a review that I had ordered from all the agencies involved in this program, the 1033 Program. I will be signing an Executive order that specifies how we are going to make sure that that program is accountable, how we're going to make sure that that program is transparent, and how are we going to make sure that we're not building a militarized culture inside our local law enforcement?

Third, I'm going to be proposing some new community policing initiatives that will significantly expand funding and training for local law enforcement, including up to 50,000 additional body-worn cameras for law enforcement agencies. And I look forward to working with Congress to make sure that in addition to what I can do administratively and with resources that we've already got, that we are in a conversation with law enforcement that wants to do the right thing to make sure that they're adequately resourced for the training and the technology that can enhance trust between communities and police.

And finally, as I mentioned, Eric Holder is going to be working in parallel with the Task Force to convene a series of these meetings all across the country, because this is not a problem simply of Ferguson, Missouri, this is a problem that is national. It is a solvable problem, but it is one that, unfortunately, spikes after one event and then fades into the background until something else happens. What we need is a sustained conversation in which, in each region of the country, people are talking about this honestly and then can move forward in a constructive fashion.

Let me just close by saying this: There was a cautionary note, I think, from everybody here that there have been commissions before, there have been task forces, there have been conversations, and nothing happens. What I try to describe to people is why this time will be different. And part of the reason this time will be different is because the President of the United States is deeply invested in making sure that this time is different. When I hear the young people around this table talk about their experiences, it violates my belief in what America can be to hear young people feeling marginalized and distrustful, even after they've done everything right. That's not who we are. And I don't think that's who the overwhelming majority of Americans want us to be.

And I think there may be a convergence here where we've got outstanding law enforcement officials who recognize that times have changed and want to be responsive. I know that Richard Beary of the International Association of Chiefs of Police spoke about how eager they are to work with us. I think that we've got activists on the ground who don't always get attention because it's oftentimes the people who aren't being constructive that get attention, but there are folks there who are working really hard. I think there's a maturity to the conversation right now that can lead us to actually getting some concrete results.

And in the 2 years I have remaining as President, I'm going to make sure that we follow through, not to solve every problem, not to tear down every barrier of mistrust that may exist, but to make things better. And that's how progress is always made in this great country of ours. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:52 p.m. in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Brittany Packnett, executive director, Teach For America St. Louis; Rasheen Aldridge, Jr., director, Young Activists United St. Louis; Charles H. Ramsey and Laurie Robinson, Co-chairs, President's Task Force on 21st-Century Policing; and Richard Beary, president, International Association of Police Chiefs.

Remarks at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland
December 2, 2014

Thank you, everybody! It is good to be back. Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you. Well, to Secretary Burwell, to Francis Collins, Tony Fauci, your teams, to all of you, thanks so much for welcoming me here today. It is wonderful to be back to America's laboratory, even if I don't always understand what you're doing. [*Laughter*]

Last year, I welcomed Francis and some of you to the White House to launch our BRAIN Initiative to unlock the mysteries of the mind and to pursue new cures for disease. And Francis promoted me at the time to "scientist in chief." [*Laughter*] Which made me very proud, although I sort of felt guilty that I hadn't studied more chemistry. [*Laughter*]

But the work you do here is remarkable, and I just got a fascinating tour of your vaccine research center. I have to say, I was very impressed with how you can clone a virus gene into a vaccine vector, then subject it to gel electrophoresis. [*Laughter*] And then pipet the samples into a 96-well microplate. [*Laughter*] Run it through the world's most advanced multiparameter flow cytometer. [*Laughter*] I mean, but—it was impressive. I've been tinkering around the White House, setting up a similar system. [*Laughter*] We use it for brewing beer. [*Laughter*] But it works well for your work also. [*Laughter*]

Now, the last time I was here at NIH, early in my Presidency, I came to announce a historic boost in funding for biomedical research. Because part of American leadership in the world—one of the things that has always marked us as exceptional—is our leadership in science and our leadership in research. And here at NIH, you have always been at the forefront of groundbreaking innovations. You've helped pioneer new treatments for everything from cancer to heart disease, to HIV/AIDS. And as a consequence, you've helped not just Americans, but people around the world, live longer, fuller lives. You've saved countless lives in every corner of the globe. And so to Francis and Tony and all your directors and staff and the researchers that you fund across the country and around the globe, you deserve great thanks for your leadership and your service and your patriotism and your lifesaving work.

And that brings me back to today. This past summer, as Ebola spread in West Africa, I told my team that fighting this disease had to be a national security priority and a priority across agencies and across our Government. I realize that here in the United States, some of the attention has shifted away recently. That's sort of how our attention spans work sometimes. Ebola is not leading the news right now. But I wanted to come here because every day, we are focused on keeping the American people safe. Every day, the NIH is at the forefront of this mission. NIH personnel have volunteered and deployed to West Africa. Some have served in medical labs, testing for Ebola. Some of your clinicians—members of the U.S. Public Health Service—have deployed to care for health care workers who got infected in the line of duty.

When Nina Pham, one of the two Dallas nurses who were infected, needed treatment, Tony and his team stepped up, and you were ready. You manned shifts around the clock, day and night. You remembered your training. You displayed great skill and professionalism. You reminded the world that it is possible to treat Ebola patients effectively and safely without endangering yourselves or others.

And all that has made an enormous difference. Like a lot of Americans, I know you fell in love with Nina. She was so sweet and big smile, optimism, sense of service, and reminded us—she reminded us of the incredible sacrifices that our tireless nurses make every day, and we can never thank them enough. And I know Tony thanks Nina for teaching him how to FaceTime. [*Laughter*] And after she was released, Ebola-free, I was proud to welcome Nina to the Oval Office and give her a big hug, and she's now back home in Texas, recovering, getting stronger. And we remember what she told the world when she was released:

"Throughout this ordeal, I have put my trust in God and my medical team." And we thank everyone on her team at the NIH Clinical Center who delivered such remarkable care to Tina.

But the point is, is that the work that you have done has continued even if the cameras have gone elsewhere. And the urgency remains, because if we are going to actually solve this problem for ourselves, we have to solve it in West Africa as well. And one of the great virtues of what you've done here at NIH is reminded people that science matters and that science works. It's not always going to be immediate. Sometimes, it's going to be iterative, and there are going to be some trials, and there are going to be some errors and false starts and blind alleys, but the basic concept of subjecting hypotheses to tests and seeing if they work and being able to document them and replicate them—the basic concept of science—and making judgments on the basis of evidence, that's what's most needed during difficult, challenging moments like the ones that we had this summer and that we continue to have in West Africa.

So, last week, just in time for Thanksgiving, NIH and your partners gave us something new to be thankful for, and that was news of the first successful step—completion of the phase 1 clinical trials—of a potential Ebola vaccine. And on my tour just now, Doctors Nancy Sullivan and Mario Roederer showed me how they and their teams did it. And I have to say, both Nancy and Mario were really good teachers and were very patient with my rudimentary questions, and the lasers were really cool. [*Laughter*] No potential Ebola vaccine has ever made it this far. So this is exciting news. But it's also a reminder of the importance of Government-funded research and our need to keep investing in basic research. [*Applause*] All right?

Because Nancy, as she was talking about the steps that had been taken, showed me—this is the kind of mementos scientists keep, I guess—is there was, like, some numbers on a little chart—[*laughter*]—from back in 1999?—in which she had first done some experiments, some trials, on the Ebola virus. So this is the product not just of last year's work, it's the product of over a decade of inquiry and work. And at the time, when—Nancy was explaining when she first had some breakthroughs in understanding the Ebola virus, nobody really gave a hoot. Until you do. And that's part of how science works. You make investments, and you pursue knowledge for knowledge's sake, in part because it turns out that knowledge may turn out useful later, and you don't always know when.

Now, last week's news is still just a first step. There are no guarantees. But Dr. Cliff Lane, who is here, is working with Liberian officials to begin large-scale tests in that country. And other potential Ebola vaccines are also in the works. I know that here at NIH, you're also working on potential treatments for Ebola. And as you move ahead on all these fronts, I want you to know you have your President's full support and the administration's full support.

You are a vital part of our fight against Ebola, across our Government. Today we released an update on our efforts, here in the United States and abroad. And it shows that, because we've stepped up our efforts in recent months, we're more prepared when it comes to protecting Americans here at home. We're screening and monitoring arrivals from the affected countries. We've equipped more hospitals with new protective gear and protocols. We've conducted outreach and training of hundreds of thousands of health care workers.

A few months ago, only 13 States could test for Ebola; today, 36 States can. Previously, there were only three facilities in the country deemed capable of treating an Ebola patient, including NIH. Today we're announcing that we now have 35 treatment centers designated to care for a patient with Ebola. So this is important progress. And we're going to just keep on at it. And throughout, we are going to be guided by the science. Not by speculation, not by fear, not by rumor, not by panic—by science.

Now, part of what the science and epidemiology and experience has taught us—and I've said this all along—is, the best way to fight this

disease, to protect Americans, is to stop it at its source. And that's why the United States continues to lead the global response in West Africa. Some 3,000 of our servicemembers and civilians are now on the ground: manning that air bridge, moving in supplies, building treatment units. I called some of our troops in West Africa on Thanksgiving to express gratitude, and they were inspiring, the can-do spirit that they displayed.

The new medical unit we built in Liberia to treat health workers opened last month and has begun discharging patients Ebola-free. We've ramped up the capacity to train hundreds of new health workers per week. We've helped improve burial practices across Liberia. And as a consequence, we've seen some encouraging news: a decline in infection rates in Liberia. And meanwhile, over the last few months, the United States has helped rally the international community. We've mobilized more than $2 billion in commitments to this fight because this has to truly be a global effort. But that money would not be there had it not been for U.S. leadership.

So our strategy is beginning to show results. We're seeing some progress. But the fight is not even close to being over. As long as this disease continues to rage in West Africa, we could continue to see isolated cases here in America. In West Africa, this remains the worst Ebola epidemic in history by a long shot. And although we've made some progress in Liberia, we've still got work to do. We've—are seeing that we still have a lot of work in Guinea and it's actually been getting worse in Sierra Leone despite some good efforts from our British partners. And this can still spread to other countries, as we've seen in Mali. Every hotspot is an ember that if not contained, can become a new fire. So we cannot let down our guard, even for a minute. And we can't just fight this epidemic, we have to extinguish it.

Now, much of the progress we've made—and the progress we still need to make—depends on funding. This is an expensive enterprise. And that money is running out. We cannot beat Ebola without more funding. If we want other countries to keep stepping up, we will have to continue to lead the way. And that's why I'm calling on Congress to approve our emergency funding request to fight this disease before they leave for the holidays. It's a good Christmas present to the American people and to the world.

The funding we're asking for is needed to keep strengthening our capacity here at home so we can respond to any future Ebola cases. The funding allows us to keep making progress in West Africa. Remember, we have to extinguish this disease. This is not something that we can just manage with a few cases here and there; we've got to stamp it out. The funding is needed to speed up testing and approval of any promising Ebola vaccines and treatments, including those here at the NIH. It's needed to help us partner with other countries to prevent and deal with future outbreaks and threats before they become epidemics.

This is something I want to just focus on for a second. Tony and I were fondly reminiscing about SARS and H1N1. [*Laughter*] That's what these guys do for fun. [*Laughter*] And we were lucky with H1N1 that it did not prove to be more deadly. We can't say we're lucky with Ebola because obviously, it's having a devastating effect in West Africa, but it is not airborne in its transmission.

There may and likely will come a time in which we have both an airborne disease that is deadly. And in order for us to deal with that effectively, we have to put in place an infrastructure—not just here at home, but globally—that allows us to see it quickly, isolate it quickly, respond to it quickly. And it also requires us to continue the same path of basic research that is being done here at the NIH that Nancy is a great example of. So that if and when a new strain of flu, like the Spanish flu, crops up 5 years from now or a decade from now, we've made the investment, and we're further along to be able to catch it. It is a smart investment for us to make. It's not just insurance, it is knowing that down the road, we're going to continue to have problems like this, particularly in a globalized world, where you move from one side of the world to the other in a day.

So this is important now, but it's also important for our future and our children's future and our grandchildren's future. And the last few elections, the American people have sent Washington a pretty clear message: Find areas where you agree, don't let the areas where you disagree shut things down, work together, and get the job done.

I cannot think of a better example of an area where we should all agree than passing this emergency funding to fight Ebola and to set up some of the public health infrastructure that we need to deal with potential outbreaks in the future. How do you argue with that? That is not a partisan issue. That is a basic, commonsense issue that all Americans can agree on.

Now, I have to say, I've been very encouraged so far by the bipartisan support in our various visits with Members of Congress. They—for the most part, people have recognized, this is not a Democratic issue or a Republican issue, it's about the safety and security of the American people. So let's get it done. This can get caught up in normal politics. We need to protect the American people, and we need to show the world how America leads.

I have to tell you, I traveled to Asia; we had the G–20 summit. If America had not led, if I had not been able to go to CDC, make a major announcement about the commitments we were going to make, be able to go to the United Nations and basically call on other countries to step up and know that we were following through with our own commitments, had we not done that, the world would not have responded in the same way. American leadership matters every time. We set the tone, and we set the agenda.

Now, in closing, I want to leave with a story that speaks to what we have to do. Nancy Writebol is from Charlotte, North Carolina. She's a mom, grandma, wife, also a Christian missionary. Along with her husband, she went to Liberia. And she was doing God's work: caring for Ebola patients. It's hard to imagine a greater expression of the Christian ethic. And she was then infected herself. So she was brought back to Emory in Atlanta; she received excellent care. Nancy was released in August. She is Ebola-free. She continues to recover. And she said this about how people treat her, even today: "You have some people that just totally wrap their arms around you and shake your hand. And then, you have other people that stand 10 feet away."

Some people wrap their arms around you. Some people stand 10 feet away. This disease is not just a test of our health systems, it is a test of our character as a nation. It asks us who we are as Americans. When we see a problem in the world, like thousands of people dying from a disease that we know how to fight, do we stand 10 feet away or 10,000 miles away, or do we lead and deploy and go to help?

And I know what kind of character I want to see in America, and I know the kind of character that's displayed by people here at NIH and some of your colleagues that are deployed right now in Liberia. That's who we are. We don't give in to fears. We are guided by our hopes, and we are guided by our reason, and we are guided by our faith, and we're guided by our confidence that we can ease suffering and make a difference. And we imagine new treatments and cures, and we discover, and we invent, and we innovate, and we test, and we unlock new possibilities.

And when we save a life and we help a person heal, we go up to them and we open our arms, and we wrap our arms around them with understanding and love and compassion and reason. That's what you do here at NIH. It's what we do as Americans. That's who we are. That's who we'll always be.

Thank you very much. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:54 p.m. at the Clinical Center. In his remarks, he referred to Anthony S. Fauci, Director, Nancy Sullivan, Biodefense Research Section Chief, Mario Roederer, ImmunoTechnology Section Chief, and H. Clifford Lane, Deputy Director for Clinical Research and Special Projects, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; Amber Vinson, a nurse who was infected with Ebola at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX, who was treated successfully; and David Writebol, husband of U.S. Ebola patient Nancy Writebol.

Remarks to the Business Roundtable and a Question-and-Answer Session
December 3, 2014

The President. Well, good morning, everybody. Happy holidays. I hope sales are good. [*Laughter*] I want to spend most of my time, as I usually do, taking questions. I want to thank Randall and the rest of the executive committee for the opportunity to speak with you here today.

Let me just give you a sense of where I think our economy currently is, what's happening around the world, and where I think it should be, and the chances for us here in Washington to accelerate rather than impede some of the progress that we've made.

Around this time 6 years ago, America's businesses were shedding about 800,000 jobs per month. Today, our businesses—including some of the most important businesses in the world that are represented here today—have created over 10.6 million new jobs; 56 months of uninterrupted job growth, which is the longest private sector job growth in our history. We just saw the best 6-month period of economic growth in over a decade. For the first time in 6 years, the unemployment rate is under 6 percent.

All told, the United States of America, over the last 6 years, have put more people back to work than Europe, Japan, and the rest of the advanced world combined. And that's a record for us to build on.

At the same time, what we've been doing is working on restructuring and rebuilding our economy for sustained long-term growth. Manufacturing has grown. The auto industry has the strongest sales since 2007. Our deficits have shrunk by about two-thirds, something that very few people, I suspect, in the BRT would have anticipated in some of our conversations 3 or 4 years ago.

When it comes to health care costs, premiums have gone up at the lowest pace on record, which means that a lot of the businesses here are saving money, as are a lot of consumers.

On the education front, high school graduations are up, college enrollments are up, math and reading scores have improved.

Internationally, our exports continue to hit record levels. On energy, we have seen a revolution that is changing not just the economy, but are also changing geopolitics. Not only is oil and natural gas production up—in part because of technological changes that have taken place—but we've also doubled our production of clean energy. And solar energy is up about tenfold; wind energy is up threefold. Unit costs for the production of clean energy are dropping down to where they're getting close to being competitive to fossil fuels. And as a consequence, we've also been able to reduce carbon emissions that cause climate change faster than most of the other industrialized countries.

So the bottom line is, is that America continues to lead. I was—Andrew Liveris and I were talking; I was in his—with his people in Brisbane, Australia. And at the G–20, what was striking was the degree of optimism that the world felt about the American economy, an optimism that in some ways is greater than how Americans sometimes feel about the American economy. [*Laughter*] I think what you saw among world leaders was consistent with what we know from global surveys, which is, when you ask people now, where is the number-one place to invest, it's the United States of America. It was China for quite some time. Now folks want to put money back into this country.

And a lot of that has to do with the fact that we've got the best workers in the world, we've got the best university system and research and development and innovation in the world, and we've got the best businesses in the world. And so a lot of you can, I think, take great credit for the kind of bounce-back that we've seen over the last 6 years.

Having said all that, I think we recognize that we've got a lot more progress to make. And I'd put it in a couple of categories. There are some commonsense things that we should be doing that we're not doing, and the reason

primarily is because of politics and ideological gridlock. But I suspect that if we surveyed folks here, regardless of your party affiliation, you'd say, let's get this done.

Infrastructure is one area where we need to go ahead and make some significant investments. Anybody who travels around the world and looks at what airports outside the United States now look like, and roads and trains and ports and airports now look like, recognize that it makes no sense for us to have a first-class economy, but second-class infrastructure. And that would not only help accelerate growth right now, it would also lay the foundation for growth in the future.

Tax reform, an area which I know is of great interest to the Business Roundtable: I have consistently said that for us to have a system in which we have, on paper, one of the two or three highest tax rates in the world when it comes to corporate taxation, but in practice, there are so many loopholes that you get huge variations between what companies pay, doesn't make sense. And we should be able to smooth the system out, streamline it in such a way that allows us to lower rates, close loopholes, and make for a much more efficient system, where folks aren't wasting a lot of time trying to hire accountants and lawyers to get out of paying taxes, but have some certainty and were able to raise just as much money on a much simpler system. That's something that I think we should be doing.

Trade: In Asia, there is a great hunger for engagement with the United States of America, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership is moving forward. Michael Froman, who is here, has been working nonstop. I've promised his family that he will be home sometime soon. [*Laughter*] We are optimistic about being able to get a deal done, and we are reinvigorating the negotiations with the Europeans on a transatlantic trade deal.

If we can get that done, that's good for American businesses, it's good for American jobs, and it's actually good for labor and environmental interests around the world. Because what we're trying to do is raise standards so that everybody is on a higher, but level, playing field. And I think that your help on that process can make an enormous difference.

Immigration reform: I recognize that there's been some controversy about the executive actions that I've taken. On the other hand, I think the BRT has been extraordinarily helpful in getting the country to recognize that this is the right thing to do for our economy. We know it will grow the economy faster. We know it will help us reduce the deficit. We know that it gives us the capacity to bring in high-skill folks who we should want to gravitate towards the United States to start businesses and to create new products and new services and to innovate and to continue the tradition of economic dynamism that's the hallmark of the United States of America.

I am still hopeful that we can get legislation done, because if we get legislation done, it actually supplants a lot of the executive actions that I've already taken, which I've acknowledged are incomplete, allow us to make some progress, but they're temporary, and we could be doing a lot better if we actually get legislation done.

So the good news, despite the fact that obviously the midterm elections did not turn out exactly as I had hoped—[*laughter*]—is that there remains enormous areas of potential bipartisan action and progress. And I've already spoken to Speaker Boehner and Senator Mitch McConnell, and what I've said to them is that I am prepared to work with them on areas where we agree, recognizing there are going to be some areas where we just don't agree.

And I think one of the habits that this town has to break is this notion that if you disagree on one thing, then suddenly, everybody takes their ball home, and they don't play. I think that there's got to be the capacity for us to say, here's an area where we're going to have some vigorous disagreement, but here are some areas where we have a common vision; let's go ahead and get that done and build some momentum, start working those muscles to actually legislate, sign some legislation, give the American people some confidence that those of us who have this extraordinary privilege of

being placed in leadership are able to actually deliver for the American people.

One final point that I'll make: I started off by talking about how generally optimistic I am about the economic trends. There are some concerns on the horizon. Obviously, Japan being weak, Europe being weak, means that the United States, even as we chug along, could be pulled back by global weakness, not only in Europe and Japan, but also the emerging markets. So we're monitoring that, and we're working internationally to try to get Europe in particular to see stronger growth.

But domestically, the area where I have the deepest concern is the fact that although corporate profits are at the highest levels in 60 years, the stock market is up 150 percent, wages and incomes still haven't gone up significantly and certainly have not picked up the way they did in earlier generations. That's part of what's causing disquiet in the general public even though the aggregate numbers look good.

And one thing I'd like to work with the BRT on is to ask some tricky questions, but important questions, about how we can make sure that prosperity is broad based. I actually think, when you look at the history of this country, when wages are good and consumers feel like they've got some money in their pocket, that ends up being good for business, not bad for business. I think most of you would agree to that. And we've got a lot of good corporate citizens in this room; unfortunately, the overall trend lines, though, have been, even as productivity and profits go up, wages and incomes as a share of overall GDP have shrunk. And that's part of what is creating an undertow of pessimism despite generally good economic news.

I think there are some concrete things we can do to address that, and I'm going to be looking forward to working with the BRT to see if we can make progress on those fronts as well.

All right? So with that, let's open it up for questions. Randall, do you want to call on folks, or do you want me to just go ahead and start?

Business Roundtable Chairman Randall L. Stephenson. If I could start with the first question, and then we'll do that.

The President. Please, go ahead.

Tax Reform

Mr. Stephenson. Your comments, sir, have been consistent as it relates to tax reform. We have been, over the last couple of days, talking a lot about what are those things that are most critical for driving job growth—middle-income job growth—and it always for us comes back to investment. The more we invest, the more we hire, the more middle-income wages grow. And as we think about what are those things that will drive business investment and that kind of job growth—you've touched on it, and you have been consistent—tax reform. And to us, there is no single factor that could be more important.

And the question is, do you think it would be useful to have somebody with your administration—within your administration that you appoint and say, this is a priority to me; we will work with the individual and Congress, and just see if this is a priority, if we could drive this through? There's a time frame here, it seems like to us, where there's something that could be done. Both sides of Congress seem receptive. And so we'd be really open to working with you, somebody specifically in your administration, to help you drive this through.

The President. Well, Jack Lew is here, our Treasury Secretary, and my understanding is, he doesn't have enough to do. [*Laughter*] So I'm thinking maybe we need to put him to work.

Let me get a little more detailed about the prospects for tax reform. We put out a white paper, a general concept on corporate tax reform, several years ago when Tim Geithner was still Treasury Secretary. I think the BRT has had an opportunity to take a look at what our basic principles have been. They've been consistent. The idea has been, close loopholes, lower rates. We have discussed the possibility of being able to bring in some of the dollars that are trapped outside of the country right now and, in a one-time transaction, potentially

use that to pay for some infrastructure improvements. I think there is some openness to that.

And when you compare what we put forward with what Dave Camp, the current House Ways and Means Chairman, put out, his principles for tax reform, there's a lot of overlap. There are some differences, but overall, conceptually, he also believes lower rates, close loopholes, a minimum tax globally that ensures that folks aren't gaming the system, but also allows you to be competitive with folks based in other countries that are operating on a territorial basis.

So there is definitely a deal to be done. I think two big hurdles that we're going to have to get over: The first is the classic problem, which is, people are in favor of tax reform in the abstract and sometimes more concerned with tax reform in the specifics. If we are in fact going to accomplish revenue-neutral corporate tax reform that substantially lowers the corporate rate, then we have to go after some deductions that people are very comfortable with. And there are going to be some winners, and there are going to be some losers in the short term. Over the long term, there's going to be less distortion in the economy, and capital will be allocated more sensibly. But in the short term, there are going to be some winners and losers, including in this room.

The question then becomes, are folks willing and ready to go ahead and make that move for the sake of a simpler, more streamlined, more sensible tax system? Because if not, it's not going to happen. All of you represented in this room have employees and businesses and plants all across the country in every congressional district, and if we don't have consistency and unity coming out of our top companies, then we're going to have—I think the likelihood of us being able to get something done is low.

The second problem is one that is solvable, but is tricky, and that is, Paul Ryan, at least in the past, has stated that—and I think Boehner has echoed this—that they don't want to just do corporate tax reform, they're interested in also combining that with individual tax reform, in part because they're concerned about passthroughs, corporations not being able to benefit the way larger companies do.

And we are actually committed to providing simpler and lower tax rates for small businesses as well. But what we're not willing to do is to structure a tax deal in which either it blows up the deficit—essentially, we can't pay for the revenue that's lost—or alternatively, that you get tax shifting from businesses to middle class and working families. And so, when you start introducing the individual side, it gets more complicated in terms of who's benefiting, what are the rates, how is it restructured.

My view is, is that if we start with the corporate side, it's a more discrete problem, fewer variables, fewer moving parts. We may be able to get that done, and then, we can potentially have a conversation about broader tax reform. That may not be how the Republicans view the situation, and so that—and that could end up being a hangup.

One last point I would make, and this relates to the issue of individual tax reform, but it also relates to one of the debates that was taking place during this lame duck period, and that is about tax extenders. As a general rule, we are open to short-term extensions of many of those provisions to make sure that all of you are able to engage in basic tax planning at least for the next couple of years and are not having to scramble during tax time, figuring out what exactly the rules are. But more broadly, we'd like to see if some of those tax extender provisions, including things that I strongly support, like research and development, are incorporated into a broader, comprehensive tax reform package.

In order to do that, though, I also want to make sure that some provisions that benefit working families are included in that package: the children's—the child tax credit, hugely important for a lot of working families; the EITC, earned-income tax credit, hugely important for a lot of working families, something that has historically been supported on a bipartisan basis because it encourages work, but it says if you're working full time, we're going to try to do everything we can to make sure that you're not in poverty when you're doing the right

thing and taking responsibility. There is a college tuition tax credit that benefits a lot of families, sometimes, families who get caught: They're not quite poor enough to qualify for Pell grants, but they don't have enough money to be able to really manage college costs.

So there are going to be some working class and middle class and working family provisions that have to be incorporated if we are to extend some of these other tax deductions and tax breaks as well.

But that, hopefully, gives you a sense of optimism on my part, but cautious optimism. I think that there are going to be some real challenges, but we are absolutely committed to working with Speaker Boehner and Mitch McConnell, as well as the BRT and other interests, in seeing if we can get this thing done. I think the time is right. And you're right, Randall, that the window is not going to be open too wide and it's going to start narrowing the closer we get into the next Presidential election, which always seems to start the day after the last election.

Federal Budget/Deficit and National Debt

Frontier Communications Corporation Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Maggie Wilderotter. Mr. President, over here, Maggie Wilderotter with Frontier Communications. Thank you for being with us. And also thank you for explaining a little bit more what you're thinking about for tax reform. I also want to just underline that the tax extenders, until there is some reform that takes place, is really important to all of us in this room.

The President. Right.

Ms. Wilderotter. As Randall mentioned, it is about capital investment that really drives income growth for middle class families. Our company serves 30,000 communities in rural America, so that is important to us.

The President. Right.

Ms. Wilderotter. One of the other things that's important to us is the continuing resolution to keep the Government going.

The President. Me too. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Wilderotter. Yes. Can you talk a little bit about how we make sure that we don't have fits and starts again on that subject?

The President. I've been encouraged by recent statements by Speaker Boehner and Leader McConnell about their interest in preventing another Government shutdown, and I take them at their word.

Look, the Federal Government budgeting process generally is—how should I put it?—not ideal. [*Laughter*] Ideally, we would have longer timeframes, greater certainty. We would be able to distinguish between capital investments that are going to have long-term payoffs and short-term operating expenses.

Historically, that's just not been how the budget process has been structured. And since the plane is constantly flying, it's hard to get in there. Maybe Jim has advice about how to switch up engines while the plane is in the air. [*Laughter*] So the tendency is just to kick the can down the road with a series of continuing resolutions.

There's been an effort to try to get back to regular procedures and to systematically look through these budgets. There was talk of an omnibus bill rather than a continuing resolution. And I think it will be useful for you to get directly from the Speaker what their intentions are at this point. But the one thing I can say for certain is that no one benefits by the Government shutting down, and it is entirely unacceptable for us not to maintain the full faith and credit of the United States Government. And we just cannot afford to engage in that kind of brinksmanship that we saw over the last couple years. Each time that happened, consumer sentiment plunged. It was a self-inflicted wound, and we had to dig ourselves back out of a hole, despite all the efforts that had been made, simply because people's confidence in the system overall was shaken. So my strong hope is, is that we don't repeat that.

And part of the principle that can prevent that is what I already articulated. We have to be able to disagree on some things while still going ahead and managing the people's business and working on the things where we do agree. Democracy is messy, but it doesn't have

to be chaos. And I've been encouraged, as I said, so far by statements by Republican leadership.

And if in fact we can get some certainty on the budget at least for the next year, that then gives us the window to work on tax reform. The good news is in all this is the incredible progress we've made on our short-term deficits. Nobody talks about them anymore. I will say that's one of the frustrating things about Washington, is people are really good about hollering about problems, and then when we solve them, nobody talks about them. We have made extraordinary progress in reducing our short-term deficits.

We still have some long-term liabilities that we've got to worry about, and some of those problems, though, have been addressed—are being addressed—by changes in the health care delivery system, which has been a huge driver of long-term Federal debt. I think I mentioned earlier that health care inflation has gone up at the slowest rate in 50 years, far slower than had been projected by CBO or by the actuaries for Medicare.

As a consequence, we've already been able to book about $188 billion in savings over the next 10 years in reduced health care outlays. And I actually think that we can get more done as some of the delivery system reforms that we talked about and are initiating through the Affordable Care Act are put in place.

So there's good news on the budget. But now what we've got to do is to create a framework in which not only do we keep our deficits low and we're able to start driving down our debt, but we're also able to make some core investments that I mentioned earlier: in infrastructure; in education, and particularly, early childhood education is an area where I think we can make a lot of progress; in basic research and science. I was out at NIH yesterday talking to a woman who had worked 10 years on the Ebola virus in great obscurity until suddenly everybody thought she was pretty interesting. And we're in the process now of phase 2 trials on an Ebola vaccine. But that kind of basic research investment is part of what keeps us at a leading edge.

So, if we can create a budget structure that allows us to make those investments, keep deficits low, streamline our tax system, then I think the opportunities for American preeminence economically are very, very high.

Yes. Doug.

Tax Reform/Trans-Pacific Partnership/Infrastructure/Immigration Reform

Business Roundtable International Engagement Committee Chairman Douglas R. Oberhelman. Mr. President, good morning. Welcome. Thank you for joining us.

The President. Good to see you.

Mr. Oberhelman. The four things you mentioned in your earlier comments—infrastructure, immigration, tax, and trade—are sweet spots for this group. They're our highest priorities. Any one, or any combination, or all of them would lead to economic growth, job creation. And everyone in here wants to grow, and everyone wants to add jobs, and we all want to raise pay, believe it or not.

The President. Oh, I do believe it.

Mr. Oberhelman. It's what we want to do. We'd be interested in your comments on the priorities of those. As you look into '15—new Congress, new faces, certainly a changed Senate—what's first, what's second? Kind of what's the lineup? Thank you.

The President. I think it's going to be very important for me to consult with Boehner and McConnell to find out how they want to sequence their efforts, because ultimately, the challenge on most of this stuff has not been my administration's unwillingness to engage or get it done, it's been the complications of Congress and the challenges they have in their respective caucuses.

My instinct, though, is to get a process started on tax reform early, because you need a pretty long runway for that. It takes some time. As I said, we've already got some overlap in the frameworks, which will help, but that's probably a full year—6 to 9 months before we could really solidify something. So getting started on that early—understanding there's not going to be a vote any time soon and there's going to be

a lot of contentious debate—I think would be helpful.

With respect to trade, we hope to be able to not simply finalize an agreement with the various parties in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, but also to be able to explain it to the public and to engage in all the stakeholders and to publicly engage with the critics, because I think some of the criticism of what we've been doing on the Trans-Pacific Partnership is groups fighting the last war as opposed to looking forward. And so that may be something discrete that we can get done if we're able to have a good, solid debate and everybody feels like it's been transparent and they understand exactly what it is that we're trying to do.

Infrastructure, I think, gets wrapped up in tax reform. The challenge for infrastructure has been that—it's not that I think my Republican friends don't want infrastructure. I notice whenever we get a project going, they're at the ribbon cutting. [*Laughter*] I think it's the "pay-fors," how do you pay for it. And they're very sensitive, as you know, to anything that might be construed as a tax. Of course, it's hard to pay for things if you don't have some sort of revenue stream.

And I've been exploring—I had a conversation with Larry Fink a while back, and Larry has been bringing together some people to see how we can do more in attracting private investment into infrastructure construction, which is done fairly effectively in a lot of other countries, but that's not been our tradition, so our tax structures and legal structures are not optimally designed to get private capital into infrastructure. But we're working on that. But I do think that if we are successful with tax reform, that may give us an avenue for a one-time big push on infrastructure.

But it's hard for me to envision this Congress being able to vote on a big infrastructure bill on its own, because I don't know where they would get the money for it. I've got some proposals, but I don't think they're likely to adopt them.

And finally, on immigration, I think that's something that probably comes last. I suspect that temperatures need to cool a little bit in the wake of my executive action. Certainly, there will be pressure initially within Republican caucuses to try to reverse what I've done, despite the fact that what I'm doing, I think, is exactly the right thing to do. We have to prioritize how we allocate limited enforcement resources, and we should be focusing on felons; we should not be focusing on breaking up families who are our neighbors and our friends and whose kids go to school with us.

It's temporary, and as soon as Congress passes comprehensive legislation, it goes away. But I don't think that that's something that this Congress will be able to do right away. My suspicion is, they'll take a couple of stabs at rolling back what I've done, and then perhaps folks will step back and say, well, rather than just do something partial that we may not be completely satisfied with, let's engage with the President to see if we can do something more comprehensive that addresses some of our concerns, but also addresses my concerns as well.

So I think that's probably the sequence. Get tax reform rolling. Make sure that everybody understands, from my perspective, it's going to have to be balanced. We're not going to leave EITC or the child tax credit behind and just do a corporate piece on its own. But if we can get that ball rolling and we can get trade done—and then there's some things that we haven't really talked about. I mentioned, for example, patent reform. There's still more work to do there. Cybersecurity, an area that is of great interest to a lot of people in this room. Some areas that shouldn't be ideological at all, don't require huge expenditures of money, do require that we reorganize ourselves to respond to new challenges and new threats. Then, you could see an environment begin to emerge of productivity in Washington, which would be exciting. I love signing bills. [*Laughter*]

All right. David.

International Economy/China-U.S. Relations/Russia/Middle East

Honeywell International Chairman and Chief Executive Officer David M. Cote. Could you provide a global perspective for us? You

were recently in China, and them now being the number-two economy in the world, us building peaceful commercial ties with them while not turning a blind eye to the things that we know are issues, is important. And it feels like you made some progress there with greenhouse gases and other things. And then, could you take a moment to talk about some of the trouble spots in the world and how you're thinking about Russia and the Middle East and Korea and what we have to deal with there?

The President. Good. Well, let me talk about economics, and then I'll talk about geopolitics. I've touched on earlier the economics, and many of you have great analysts, so I'm probably not telling you anything you don't know or are not experiencing concretely in your businesses.

The United States stands out as an economy that's going strong at the moment. Japan is contracting in a way that surprised many analysts and I know surprised Prime Minister Abe. He's got new elections. There's a delay in the consumption tax, that—the second phase of it, that was slated to go into effect. They're pursuing fairly aggressive monetary policy. But I don't know whether they're going to be able to pull out of the current variation on what's been a pretty long-term slump any time soon, and they've still got some debt overhang that they've got to address.

In Europe, the debate has generally been framed as austerity and prudence promoted by the Germans versus a desire for a looser set of fiscal policies among the southern countries. If you look, the truth is, is that Spain, France, to a lesser extent Italy, most of the big countries in the south have been engaging in some pretty serious structural reforms. They haven't done everything that they need to do in terms of providing labor flexibility, for example, but they are making strides in addressing many of those issues. But right now what you've got is an environment in which the dangers of deflation and really weak demand in Europe chronically, over a long period of time, I think are the—are more significant than dangers of overheating economies and inflation in the European Union.

And we have—I joke sometimes that I'm an honorary member of the European Commission, and Jack certainly is, Tim Geithner before him. [*Laughter*] We have spent a lot of time trying to manage through various crises that pop up in Europe. And my concern is, is that because there's not a current financial crisis and the markets are relatively calm, that we're not paying enough attention to just the overall weakness of the European economy.

And we keep on poking and prodding, suggesting to them that, in our own circumstances, for example, we were able to reduce our deficits in part because, yes, we raised some taxes, but in part because we grew faster. And if you've just got weaker demand chronically, then it's actually harder to get out of a hole than if you had stronger investment and stronger demand there.

The emerging markets, I think, have been slower than anticipated. China has a fairly good rationale for that. They're trying to shift away from a model that was entirely export driven to a model that recognizes they need stronger demand inside of China. And they've got to have a nascent, but growing, middle class start to have enough confidence to spend some money.

But that requires a complete reorganization of their economy. They've got a real estate situation, in part because of state-sponsored spending, that is always at risk of overheating. And so the new normal that they're anticipating means that they won't be growing quite as fast as they had before. If they grow at 7 percent—we'd take it—but for them, that's significantly slower. And that then has ramifications in terms of demand for commodities, which, in turn, affects a whole lot of emerging markets.

India: Modi has impressed me so far with his willingness to shake up the bureaucratic inertia inside of India. But that is a long-term project, and we'll have to see how successful he is. Brazil: challenges, but they've got—they just completed an election, and I think they recognize they need to grow faster.

So I guess the overall global picture—and, Jack, you can correct me if there's anything that I'm saying that's wrong—is people continue to look to America for economic leadership.

We need some other engines to be pulling the global economy along, and we're pursuing diplomatic policies and consultations to try to encourage that.

On the geopolitics, my meeting with President Xi I thought was very productive, and obviously, we had some significant deliverables. He has consolidated power faster and more comprehensively than probably anybody since, I think, Deng Xiaoping. And everybody has been impressed by his clout inside of China after only a year and a half or 2 years. There are dangers in that: on issues of human rights, on issues of clamping down on dissent. He taps into a nationalism that worries his neighbors and that we've seen manifest in these maritime disputes in the South China Sea and as well as on the Senkaku Islands.

On the other hand, I think they have a very strong interest in maintaining good relations with the United States. And my visit was a demonstration of their interest in managing this relationship effectively.

Our goal with China has been to say to them, we, too, want a constructive relationship. We've got an integrated world economy, and the two largest economies in the world have to have an effective relationship together. It can be a win-win for both sides, but there are some things we need them to fix. And we are pressing them very hard on issues of cybersecurity and cybertheft, mostly in the commercial area. It is indisputable that they engage in it, and it is a problem. And we push them hard on it.

One thing the BRT can do is to help us by speaking out when you're getting strong-armed about some of these issues. And I know it's sensitive because you don't want to be necessarily penalized in your operations in China, but that's an area that's important. Same thing with intellectual property. We are pushing them hard on that.

One of the ancillary benefits of the Trans-Pacific Partnership is to create high standards in the region that then China has to adapt to, as opposed to a race to the bottom where there's no IP protection, for example, and China is really setting the terms for how trade and investment should operate.

President Xi is interested in a business investment treaty. That could be significant because it could help to change the environment in which you are able to invest in China without being discriminated against relative to domestic firms. We've got a lot of work to do on that, but that's a work stream that we've set up.

So I think we have to be cautious and clear-eyed about our relationship with China, but there's no reason why we should not be able to manage that relationship in a way that is productive for us and productive for the world.

I'm less optimistic about Russia. I have a very direct, blunt, and businesslike relationship with Putin. We had a very productive relationship when Medvedev was President, even though Putin was still the power behind the throne. In part because, I think, the situation in Ukraine caught him by surprise, he has been improvising himself into a nationalist, backward-looking approach to Russian policy that is scaring the heck out of his neighbors and is badly damaging his economy. And sanctions are having a big bite on their economy.

We continue to offer them a pathway to a diplomatic resolution of the problem. But the challenge is, this is working for him politically inside of Russia, even though it is isolating Russia completely internationally. And I think people should take note of how unified we have been able to keep the Europeans on sanctions and penalizing Russia for its behavior, despite the fact that it's tough on the Russian economy—or on the European economy. But people have recognized there's a core principle at stake that helped to establish peace in Europe and prosperity in Europe that can't be ignored.

But if you ask me, am I optimistic that Putin suddenly changes his mindset, I don't think that will happen until the politics inside of Russia catch up to what's happening in the economy inside of Russia, which is part of the reason why we're going to continue to maintain that pressure.

And finally, in the Middle East, you are going through a generational shift, a tectonic shift in the Middle East, and it is messy, and it is dangerous. Part of it is sectarian schisms

between Shia and Sunni and conflicts between states that engage in proxy fights that are far more bloody and vicious and significant now than the conflict between Arabs and Jews. And you're seeing that primarily in Iraq and Syria.

And I am confident about our ability to push ISIL back in Iraq. Syria, I think, is a broader and longer term, more difficult, long-term proposition, in part because the civil war has gotten so bad and the interests of outside parties are so conflicting that it may take time to let that thing settle down. But obviously, we're very active not just militarily, but diplomatically.

The longer-term problem in the Middle East is—and this relates to the economy—the whole region in some ways has gone down a blind alley where too often Islam is now equated with rejection of education, modernity, women's participation, all the things that allow you to thrive in a modern economy. And that's not uniformly true, but too often those forces inside of Islam have been elevated, and moderate voices and voices that recognize Islam should be compatible with science, education, tolerance, openness, global commerce, productivity—too often those voices have been silenced.

So the question now becomes, are we able to strengthen some of those voices? That is a generational problem. And some of the things we're doing—for example, entrepreneurial summits for Muslim small-business leaders—that's the kind of thing that we want to continue to promote and where we thing the BRT can be very helpful.

But in the meantime, a big chunk of my job is just making sure that we help to contain the damage that's being done inside of the Middle East and then, hopefully, over time, build towards a better future there. That's not a 2-year project; that's going to be a longer term project.

That was a long answer, but it was a big question. [*Laughter*] Right? He said he wanted to go around the world, and I did that pretty fast.

All right. Yes, in the back. Fred.

Gasoline Tax/Highway Trust Fund/Infrastructure/China

FedEx Corporation Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Frederick W. Smith. Mr. President, you mentioned infrastructure in your opening remarks, and the BRT, I think, would echo the fact that our highways and bridges are deteriorating, and the lack of investment is creating congestion, which is retarding economic activity.

The President. I want my FedEx package moving smooth through our infrastructure.

Mr. Smith. Absolutely. And "60 Minutes" did a very good piece on this problem the other day. So the highway trust fund, which provides the funding for all of these infrastructure improvements, ran out of money in August, and it was papered over with a patch based on some pension accounting.

So now you have bipartisan bills in both the Senate, from Senator Corker, a Republican, and Senator Murphy of Connecticut; you have, as of yesterday, a bipartisan bill in the House with Congressman Petri, a Republican, and Congressman Blumenauer, a Democrat. And you had the Chamber of Commerce head and the head of the AFL–CIO jointly testify in Congress about the highway trust fund, the gasoline and diesel tax, and you've got the entire industry supporting an increase in highway taxation to fund these infrastructure improvements. So why not, before you—before the Congress goes home for December, just pass a bill that takes the two bipartisan bills that I just mentioned up and solves the problem? Because come May, it's going to run out of money again because the patch is over. I would think that would be a great opportunity for the—you and the new Congress to show some bipartisan success here.

The President. I'll tell you, Fred, the—if I were running Congress, I'd potentially take you up on that offer or suggestion. I think I would have—probably already would have done it.

In fairness to Members of Congress, votes on gas tax are really tough. [*Laughter*] Gas prices are one of those things that really bug

people. When they go up, they're greatly attuned to them. When they do down, they don't go down enough. And so, historically, I think there's been great hesitance.

So I guess what I'd do is separate out, Fred, a short-term problem and a long-term problem. Short term is we've got to replenish the highway trust fund. And I will engage with Speaker Boehner and McConnell to see what they think they can get done to make sure that we're not running out of money. Because we've got a whole bunch of construction projects that are in train right now that—set aside the stuff that we need to do, just keeping going on the stuff that is currently operating—would be endangered if we don't replenish it.

The question is going to be, is there a formula long term for us to get a dedicated revenue source for funding the infrastructure that we need that is not so politically frightening to Members of Congress that it's reliable? So the gas tax hasn't been increased for 20 years. There's a reason for that. And if that's your primary source of revenue when the population has—I don't know what it's done, but it's gone up X percent; GDP has gone up X percent—we've got—I mean, your business, Fred, has completely transformed over the last two decades, and yet we still have the same mechanism to try to keep up.

It's probably a good time for us to redesign and think through how do—what is a sustainable way for us on a regular basis to make the investments we need. And this may be something that we can introduce into the tax reform agenda. It may end up being too complicated and we've got to do something separate, but we've got to figure this out. We are falling behind.

Dave, you were asking earlier about China. I do not take potential competition from China lightly, but I am absolutely confident we've got better cars than China does. And I'd much rather have our problems than China's problems. That I'm confident about. On the other hand, the one thing I will say is that if they need to build some stuff, they can build it. And over time, that wears away our advantage competitively. It's embarrassing: You drive down their roads, and you look at what they're able to do. The place that we stayed at for the APEC summit was this lavish conference center, and it probably put most of the conference centers here to shame. They had built it in a year.

Now, you've got an authoritarian Government that isn't necessarily accountable. I understand we're not going to do that. But if they're able to build their ports, their airports, their smart grid, their air traffic control systems, their broadband systems in—with that rapidity, and they're highly superior to ours, over time, that's going to be a problem for us.

So, Fred, I guess the answer is, I'm going to talk to McConnell and Boehner to see what we can do short term and to see whether these bipartisan bills have any legs. They'll have a better sense of head counts. And I'll have to talk to Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi as well. But even if we were able to get something done, it would not be the kind of 10-year solution that we need. The best, I suspect, they could do would be to stagger through another year. And we've got to have a better way of planning and executing on infrastructure investment.

And I'll be engaging with the BRT and you, hopefully, who are—and others who are interested to see if we can come up with something. And I've got to check in with Larry to see if he's figured out whether we can get all that global capital on the sidelines to start helping us fund some infrastructure projects here in the United States.

Yes. Greg.

Immigration Reform

Motorola Solutions Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Gregory Q. Brown. So, just to pivot back to immigration for a minute. It remains a top priority unequivocally of BRT. We are of the mind that the policy and the politics can still align sometime in 2015. We are steadfast and consistent in comprehensive or broad-based reform and all the components that come with that. We agree with you on timing; maybe it's for, whatever, second quarter, summer, whatever it ends up being, but there's still an opportunity to do that. As we go down this

path, and what appears to be a piecemeal approach with multiple bills that can advance, I just wanted to make the comment: We all collectively need to be mindful of the sequencing and the packaging of those individual pieces of legislation and how they're viewed so we don't talk past each other.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Brown. You know what I'm saying. So——

The President. I do. And the—I mean, Greg, look, let's be blunt. BRT has a great interest in the high-skill visa issue and H–1Bs and making sure that STEM graduates are available to work and ultimately start businesses here in the United States. I'm in—I'm for that as well.

There was a limit to how much we could do on that front through executive action because something like H–1B visa numbers are clear, statutory, not subject to a lot of executive interpretation. But, for example, we could administratively make sure that folks who had been approved for green cards, that process was accelerated so that they weren't stuck and their employers weren't hobbled in terms of utilizing those personnel in a more efficient, effective way. So that's component one, and I know that's of preeminent interest to this room.

There's an agricultural component. There wasn't a lot we could do administratively on the ag sector, but those whose businesses keep track and are related to what happens in agriculture understand that we should have a more efficient system for managing fairly, justly, agricultural workers who are vital to the economy.

And frankly, this is one of the few areas where it genuinely is true that it's hard to find Americans to do those jobs. Sometimes, that's overstated. Sometimes, the question is—and I hope I'm not offending anybody here—but sometimes, when folks say, we can't find anybody, it's just, you don't want to pay as much as you'd have to, to find some folks.

But in the ag sector, that's hard work, and it's hard to find enough American-born workers to actually get it done. But we've got to treat them fairly and make sure that it's good for workers, good for business. That we could not do much about through executive action. So those are two big components that are of interest to this group that need to get done.

Border security: The truth is, we're already doing a lot. We're going to be doing more as a consequence of the executive actions. There was a spike in concern about the borders because those kids had been coming up from Central America during the summer and it got 2 weeks of wall-to-wall coverage until everybody forgot about it. It does reflect real problems in Central America with their economies and violence, but also active marketing by smugglers to parents, saying that they could get kids in. We've brought that back down so the numbers are now below what they were 2 years ago.

Overall, the border is less porous than it's been any time since the 1970s. And we make huge investments down there. We can still do more, but the truth is, were working that part of it real hard.

And then, there's the issue that I did deal with in executive actions, although not for everybody, and that is the 11 million people who are here undocumented, but the vast majority who are law abiding. And the one principle, I guess—if in fact we can still get a comprehensive deal going forward, even if it's somewhat piecemeal—is, I am not going to preside over a system in which we know these folks are in the kitchens of most restaurants in the country, are cleaning up most of the hotels that all of you stay in, that are doing the landscaping in most neighborhoods where you live, whose kids are going to school with our kids, and we tolerate it because it's good for us economically to have cheap labor and services, but we never give them a path to be part of this country in a more full and fair way.

That's just not who we are. That's not how most of our forebears got to the point where we had the opportunities we've got today. And so I'm not going to perpetuate a system of that sort.

I've taken executive actions. What I'd like to see, and I'm happy to negotiate, is to see if we can solidify that into law. But it's going to be hard, I think, for me and for other Democrats to vote for a big package that says, all right,

were going to still not deal with that and just deal with those aspects of it that are of core concern to the BRT. It doesn't mean I can't have that conversation, but I want to be honest about the complications of us doing something piecemeal.

Mr. Brown. Well, and we support——

The President. I know you do.

Mr. Brown. ——the components.

The President. No, you guys are all there.

Mr. Brown. High-tech, ag. Okay.

The President. You guys have been terrific on this. I have no complaints at all, and in fact, I have only gratitude for the way that BRT stepped up. I think everybody here sincerely understands what immigration has meant to the life of this country.

And just in terms of macroeconomics—it's not a sexy argument to make to the public—but we are younger than our competitors. And that is entirely because of immigration. And when you look at the problems that China, Japan, Europe, Russia, are all going to have, a lot of it just has to do with they're getting old. And we stay young because we're constantly being replenished by these striving families from around the world. And we should want that to continue.

White House aide. Last question, sir.

The President. All right. I'll take two more, what the heck. [*Laughter*] Right back here and then right over here.

Trade

Q. Mr. President, I think almost everyone agrees that U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman is doing a Herculean job of driving trade agreements around the world. It seems to be common sense that more access to global trade is good for the creation of U.S. jobs. How can we get TPA passed so that Michael can have the clear support that he needs to drive these agreements?

The President. Well, I'm going to be talking to McConnell and Boehner, Reid and Pelosi, and making a strong case on the merits as to why this has to get done. It is somewhat challenging because of a factor that I mentioned earlier, which is Americans feeling as if their wages and incomes have stagnated.

And there's a half-truth that is magnified, I think, in the discussions around trade that global competition has contributed to some of that wage stagnation. It's an appealing argument. I think when you look at the numbers, it's actually an incorrect argument that over time, growth, investment, exports all have increased the capacity for working families to improve their economic standing. But I say it's a half-truth because there's no doubt that some manufacturing moved offshore in the wake of China entering the WTO and as a consequence of NAFTA.

Now, more of those jobs were lost because of automation and capital investment, but there's a narrative there that makes for some tough politics. We have to be able to talk directly to the public about why trade is good for America, good for American businesses, and good for American workers. And we have to dispel some of the myths.

Part of the argument that I'm making to Democrats is, don't fight the last war. You already have—if somebody is wanting to outsource, if any of the companies here wanted to locate in China, you've already done it. If you wanted to locate in a low-wage country with low labor standards and low environmental standards, there hasn't been that much preventing you from doing so. And ironically, if we are able to get Trans-Pacific Partnership done, then we're actually forcing some countries to boost their labor standards, boost their environmental standards, boost transparency, reduce corruption, increase intellectual property protection. And so all that is good for us.

Those who oppose these trade deals ironically are accepting a status quo that is more damaging to American workers. So—and I'm going to have to engage directly with our friends in labor and our environmental organizations and try to get from them why it is that they think that—for example, Mike is in a conversation with Vietnam, one of the potential signatories to the TPP. Now, right now there are no labor rights in Vietnam. I don't know how it's good for labor for us to tank a deal that

would require Vietnam to improve its laws around labor organization and safety. I mean, we're not punishing them somehow by leaving them out of something like this. Let's bring them in.

On the environmental front, I mean, I haven't looked carefully at the environmental laws in Malaysia recently, but I suspect they're not as strong as they are here. It's not a bad thing for us to nudge them in a better direction, particularly since we now know that environmental problems somewhere else in the world are going to ultimately affect us.

So I think that there are folks in my own party and in my own constituency that have legitimate complaints about some of the trend lines of inequality, but are barking up the wrong tree when it comes to opposing TPP, and I'm going to have to make that argument.

But I will tell you, though, when you talk to Boehner and McConnell, that some of those same antitrade impulses are more ascendant in the Republican Party than they might have been 20 years ago as well. And some of you may have encountered those in some of your conversations. And this was why it goes back to the point: We're not going to get trade done, we're not going to get infrastructure done, we're not going to get anything done in this town until we're able to describe to the average American worker how at some level this is improving their wages, it's giving them the ability to save for retirement, it's improving their financial security.

If people continue to feel like Democrats are looking after poor folks and Republicans are looking after rich folks and nobody is looking after me, then we don't get a lot of stuff done. And the trend lines are evidence of the fact that folks have gotten squeezed. And obviously, 2007, 2008 really ripped open for people how vulnerable they were.

All right. Nick.

Federal Regulations

American Electric Power Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer Nicholas K. Akins. Mr. President, thank you for being here today. We talked about many issues that are on the 2015 agenda for the Business Roundtable. One of the real pervasive issues that I know you've talked about before is the regulatory burden in this country, and still, it remains the major issue that many of us deal with.

In my industry, American Electric Power, we're in the midst of a major transition in our industry. We have environmental rules obviously that we continue to advance and have done quite a good job of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and so forth. And I know that we've had billions being spent on mercury removal at the time when we're now having greenhouse gas rules being put in place that even independent system operators say that there will be impacts on the reliability of the grid.

And I know you've been seriously responsible and involved with the reliability implications of our grid post-Super Storm Sandy, from a cyber-physical standpoint. And it really is interesting for us to see this transition occurring. We've got to be reasonable and rational. And it goes to the overall regulatory question: How do we continue to make progress—and I'd like just your views on—you've talked about this before—how do you see the progress that's been made and what you anticipate occurring in the next couple of years relative to removing some of this regulatory burden that combined makes us all uncompetitive?

The President. I think it's a great question. It's probably a good place to close because I think this is an area where I'd like to see us do more together.

I've said before to my staff—I haven't said this publicly, so I've got to be careful here. You get a little looser in your last 2 years of office, maybe. [*Laughter*] And this is a little tongue-in-cheek, but it will get to a point: that the Republicans—and maybe I'd throw the BRT in here—are actually about 25-percent right when it comes to regulatory burden. Now, you'd say the numbers are different. But what I mean by that is, nobody wants to be regulated, and there are some regulations that are burdensome on businesses. They'd rather not do them, but the common good that is served is sufficiently important, the benefits so out-

weigh the costs that, as a society, we should go ahead and do them.

And we were talking about China earlier. I would just point to one simple example, and that is, you would not want your kids growing up in Beijing right now, because they could not breathe. And the fact of the matter is, that used to be true in Los Angeles, as recently as 1970. And the reason it changed was because of the Clean Air Act. And in my hometown of Chicago, the Chicago River caught fire right around the same period, and because of the Clean Water Act, you now have folks paddling down the water and fishing. And the commercial renaissance of downtown Chicago is, in large part, driven by a really big, radical piece of environmental legislation that, at the time, people said would destroy our businesses and our competitiveness.

So there's an example of something that, it's inconvenient, it's tough, but it's the right thing to do. And over time, I actually think it's not only good for our quality of life, it's actually good for our economy. Because we've got some really innovative companies here, and you guys figure out how to adapt to those regulations.

But remember what I said at the beginning: You're actually about 25-percent right. There—what is absolutely true is, is that as we comb through our regulatory structures, there are old regulations that have outlived their usefulness. You have regulations on railroads that don't take into account GPS, and so they have folks doing a whole bunch of stuff that doesn't acknowledge technologies that have sprung up over the last 20 years. You have regulations that are poorly written. You've got regulations that are not properly synched up, so that you have different agencies with different responsibilities and so compliance costs end up skyrocketing. You have regulations that squash innovation, because at times, some of the agencies, the regulatory agencies treat every problem like a nail and only have a hammer and aren't engaging with industry enough to think, all right, here is the problem we're trying to solve; is there a smarter way of solving it?

So what we've tried to do is to set up a structure in which we can engage directly with various industries, explain here's the goal we're trying to accomplish, solicit as much feedback as possible, and then try to design systems that provide some flexibility, allow for creative adaptation, but still hit the mark, still hit the goal.

And for example, on the power plant rule, which obviously you're having to spend a lot of time with, I recognize that this is a big expense for a lot of companies. On the other hand, I think Gina McCarthy has tried to have a sufficiently open process so that she's working with not only industry, but on a State-by-State basis, recognizing not every State is the same, to figure out, is there a smarter way for us to do this, but still meet the mark of reducing our overall carbon emissions?

What I'd like to do in these last 2 years is figure out how we can improve the system to find that 25 percent—and again, we may not always agree on what the 25 percent is—and can we institutionalize it so that it outlives not—my administration?

We already instituted a cost-benefit analysis system that—or we inherited one that had been instituted. It was controversial for a while, mostly criticism from Democrats. I actually believe in cost-benefit. I think it makes sense for us to engage in a vigorous review. And there has—and my essential rule has been, we're not going to promulgate new regulations unless you can show a significant benefit relative to costs. And we've been able to do that. We've been able to document it in the most rigorous way possible.

But are there some other institutional things we can do to build the process? So, for example, there's more input on the front end rather than the rule gets promulgated, published, and then there's this big, cumbersome, inefficient, unwieldy process of comments. And maybe—are there smarter ways of doing that? We're spending a lot of time on the regulatory look-back process, digging back into old rules and seeing what don't make sense.

So what I'd like people to do, the BRT to do is, perhaps industry by industry, work with Jeff, and let's inventory what are the rules that

bother you most. We'll go through them. I'll tell you, if it's child labor laws, I'm probably going to hang to them. [*Laughter*] We're going to keep that rule. If it's some basic issues around environmental protection, I'm going to be wanting to preserve them. But in those instances where there are significant costs, I may say we're not going to change the goal, do you think there's a smarter way of doing this, because we're willing to listen if you think there is. Less command-control, more market incentive—we're open to it.

And on that list, I suspect there may be 4 or 5 regulations out of 20, 25 where you can persuade us, you know what, this actually should just be eliminated. It doesn't make sense anymore. Or it should be replaced. And we will be open to doing that.

I—the Job Council that we put together, that some of you participated in, gave us a list of recommendations, and some of them involve, for example, streamlining infrastructure projects. We adopted almost all those recommendations. And business was absolutely right: It wasn't that they minded having an environmental review. They didn't like the idea of having permitting, environmental review, all this stuff go consecutively, and you end up with an 8-year timeframe, when, if you put it in on parallel tracks, you could compress it down to 1 year.

Well—so we are open to common sense. And what I have assigned Jeff to do and my entire Cabinet to do—Penny Pritzker and Tom Perez and others—is to sit down, listen to you, and if you can show us either that something is counterproductive and doesn't work or there's a smarter way of meeting the goal, we will embrace it, happily.

There are going to be times, though, where we just disagree on the goal. And I'm going to be—workers' safety—my instruction to Tom Perez is, I want our workers to be safe. And we now do have probably the safest workforce that we've ever had in history. Made huge strides on that, partly because of just continuous improvement that you've instituted in your own companies. This has been good for workers. It's been good for business. But frankly, if it hadn't been for some initial laws to prod you, some of it just wouldn't have happened.

So we're going to hang on to worker safety rules. The question then is going to be, is there a way, for example, for us to enforce it in a more efficient way and a less disruptive way, but continues to hold you accountable? That's a conversation Tom Perez is going to be happy to have.

All right? Happy holidays, everybody. It's good to be in America. God bless us. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:21 a.m. at the headquarters of the Business Roundtable. In his remarks, he referred to Andrew N. Liveris, chairman and chief executive officer, Dow Chemical Co.; W. James McNerney, Jr., chairman and chief executive officer, Boeing Co.; Nancy Sullivan, Biodefense Research Section Chief, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; Laurence D. Fink, chairman and chief executive officer, BlackRock, Inc.; Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Prime Minister Dmitriy Anatolyevich Medvedev of Russia; and Jeffrey D. Zients, Director, National Economic Council. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Mr. Smith referred to Thomas J. Donohue, chairman, U.S. Chamber of Commerce; and Richard L. Trumka, president, AFL–CIO. Another participant referred to Trade Promotion Authority (TPA).

Remarks at the White House Tribal Nations Conference
December 3, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody! *Kahee.* Well, thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat, please have a seat.

Audience member. Love you!

The President. Love you back. [*Laughter*] It's good to see you.

Audience member. We love you, man!

The President. Thank you.

Audience member. Love you more! [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, welcome to the 2014 White House Tribal Nations Conference. Five years ago, when we held this meeting for the first time, it was historic, the largest-ever gathering of tribal leaders at the White House. And we got some valuable work done. So we thought, hey, this is a pretty good idea, let's do this again. And now we're meeting for the sixth time. This conference has become an institution.

And I want to thank every tribal leader here for making that happen, especially those of you who come year after year, committed to making our nation-to-nation relationship as strong as it can be.

I also want to thank the Members of Congress who are here today. I want to thank Sally Jewell, our outstanding Secretary of Interior. Sally is also the Chair of the White House Council on Native American Affairs. And I'm proud to have Native Americans serving with dedication and skill in my administration, including somebody I love, Jodi Gillette of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Everybody here knows Jodi, my Special Assistant for Native American Affairs, as well as Raina Thiele, who is Denaina and Yup'ik and works in the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

If I could, I'd give a shout-out to every nation here today. Each is a unique and cherished part of our American community. To all of my adopted Crow brothers and sisters, *hine wabeh itchik.* It is a good day. [*Laughter*]

Grand Jury Decision in Death of Eric Garner in New York City

I hope you'll allow me this indulgence before I get started talking about what we have accomplished and what we still have to accomplish, because one of the things about being President is, news breaks, and it's important for people to hear how I feel and how I'm thinking about some important issues that we face in this Nation.

Some of you may have heard there was a decision that came out today by a grand jury not to indict police officers who had interacted with an individual named Eric Garner, in New York City, all of which was caught on videotape and speaks to the larger issues that we've been talking about now for the last week, the last month, the last year, and sadly, for decades, and that is, the concern on the part of too many minority communities that law enforcement is not working with them and dealing with them in a fair way.

And there's going to be, I'm sure, additional statements by law enforcement. My tradition is not to remark on cases where there may still be an investigation. But I want everybody to understand that this week, in the wake of Ferguson, we initiated a Task Force whose job it is to come back to me with specific recommendations about how we strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and communities of color and minority communities that feel that bias is taking place; that we are going to take specific steps to improve the training and the work with State and local governments when it comes to policing in communities of color; that we are going to be scrupulous in investigating cases where we are concerned about the impartiality and accountability that's taking place.

And as I said when I met with folks both from Ferguson and law enforcement and clergy and civil rights activists, I said this is an issue that we've been dealing with for too long, and it's time for us to make more progress than we've made. And I'm not interested in talk, I'm interested in action. And I am absolutely committed as President of the United States to making sure that we have a country in which everybody believes in the core principle that we are equal under the law.

So I just got off the phone with my Attorney General, Eric Holder. He will have more specific comments about the case in New York. But I want everybody to know here, as well as everybody who may be viewing my remarks here today, we are not going to let up until we see a strengthening of the trust and a strengthening of the accountability that exists between our communities and our law enforcement.

And I say that as somebody who believes that law enforcement has an incredibly

difficult job; that every man or woman in uniform are putting their lives at risk to protect us; that they have the right to come home, just like we do from our jobs; that there's real crime out there that they've got to tackle day in and day out; but that they're only going to be able to do their job effectively if everybody has confidence in the system.

And right now, unfortunately, we are seeing too many instances where people just do not have confidence that folks are being treated fairly. And in some cases, those may be misperceptions, but in some cases, that's a reality. And it is incumbent upon all of us, as Americans, regardless of race, region, faith, that we recognize this is an American problem, and not just a Black problem or a Brown problem or a Native American problem. This is an American problem. When anybody in this country is not being treated equally under the law, that's a problem. And it's my job as President to help solve it. [*Applause*] All right?

Relations Between Tribal Nations and the Federal Government

Now, when I visited the Crow Nation in Montana, I was a candidate for this office, and I made it a point to meet with tribal leaders on the campaign trail as often as I could, because I wanted to make sure our country did better by our First Americans. Talk was cheap, and there had been too many promises that hadn't been kept. And I tried to make sure that I didn't overpromise. I had tried to make clear to the leaders that I met with that I wasn't going to be able singlehandedly to reverse hundreds of years of history, but what I could do is listen and learn and partner with you.

I wanted to change the relationship between our governments, to elevate your voices in Washington and give your tribes greater say over the decisions that affect the lives of your people every day. And I wanted to turn the page on a history that is riddled with too many broken promises, write a new chapter with a spirit of respect and trust. And today, more than 6 years later, I'm proud of everything that we've done to make that happen.

Together, we've strengthened your sovereignty: giving more power to tribal courts and police, restoring hundreds of thousands of acres of tribal trust lands. We've expanded opportunity: permanently reauthorizing the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, speeding up the process for businesses signing leases in Indian Country, building roads, expanding high-speed Internet access, and moving forward on renewable energy projects. We've delivered justice: resolving legal disputes that had dragged on for decades, untying your hands when it comes to dealing with domestic violence.

So, as I said earlier, as I said on the campaign trail, we haven't solved every problem, but I've been able to keep a promise to all of you that I would learn and I would listen and I'd treat you with the respect that you deserve. And we have more work to do, but when we—[*applause*]. We have more work to do, but when we step back, we see there's virtually no area in which we haven't made significant progress together. We can take pride in that.

And I made another promise that I'd visit Indian Country as President. And this June, I kept that promise. I know that the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is here. Where are you all? So Michelle and I traveled to their reservation in North Dakota. It was a day I'll never forget. We attended the annual Cannon Ball Flag Day powwow. [*Laughter*] Students were singing Lakota national—the Lakota national anthem. There was a drum group that performed a veterans' song as American flags flew in the breeze—and it was breezy. It did make me think about, I'm glad I was there during the summer. [*Laughter*] But this drum group was honoring a tribal citizen who served in our—each was honoring a tribal member who had served in our military. People of all ages wore the traditional regalia with pride. And it was clear how deeply this nation values its culture and its history. And it was clear how deeply they cared for each other, especially their young people.

And so it was arranged for me to meet with some of these young people. And Michelle and I, before the powwow, sat down with a group

of Lakota young adults. There was no press, no teachers, no parents. It was just us. And folks were invited to say whatever was on their minds. And these young people could not have been more poised, and they could not have been more thoughtful. And they talked about their families and their friends and their dreams of the future. But they also talked about the pain in their hearts and the obstacles they had had to overcome and the problems they had seen with loved ones who had been brought down by drugs or alcohol or violence or poverty.

One young man was raising his four little brothers by himself. All of them knew somebody that they loved who had attempted suicide, committed suicide, died in a car accident before their time. Some of them had spent time living in a bus. And there were tears in that room pretty much the entire conversation and the sense that schools weren't always preparing them properly and that they weren't sure about the possibilities of a better future.

And Michelle and I were honored that these young people opened up to us. But more importantly, we were moved because they were like Malia and Sasha, just as smart, just as hopeful, just as beautiful. But at their core, there was a nagging doubt that they would have the opportunities that my daughters had. And nothing gets me more frustrated than when I hear that. Nothing gets me angrier than when I get a sense that our young people early in life are already feeling like opportunities are foreclosed to them, because that's not who we are.

And so Michelle and I ended up staying longer than we had planned, and we got a lot of hugs in, and we walked away shaken because they—some of these kids were carrying burdens no young person should ever have to carry. And it was heartbreaking. And we told them, because they were such extraordinary young people—strong and talented and courageous—we said, you've got to believe in yourselves, because we believe in you. And we want to give those young people and young Native Americans like them the support they deserve. We have to invest in them and believe in them and love them. And if we do, there's no question of the great things they can achieve, not just for their own families, but for their nation and for the United States.

And the truth is those young people were representative of young people in every tribe, in every reservation in America. And too many face the same struggles that those Lakota teenagers face. They're not sure that this country has a place for them. Every single one of them deserves better than they're getting right now. They are our children, and they deserve the chance to achieve their dreams.

So, when Michelle and I got back to the White House after our visit to Standing Rock, I told my staff—I brought Sally in, and I brought Arne Duncan in, and I brought whoever else was involved in youth and education and opportunity and job training, and I said, you will find new avenues of opportunity for our Native youth. You will make sure that this happens on my watch.

And as I spoke, they knew I was serious because it's not very often where I tear up in the Oval Office. I deal with a lot of bad stuff in this job. It is not very often where I get choked up, so they knew I was serious about this.

And so here is what I want you to know that we're working on as a consequence of these conversations. Number one, today we're releasing a report on the unique challenges that Native youth face, because we cannot solve these challenges without a comprehensive picture of the problem.

Number two, I'm instructing every member of my Cabinet to experience what Michelle and I did at Standing Rock: to sit down with Native young people and hear firsthand about their lives. Sally Jewell has already done it. Arne Duncan—have already started. I want everybody to do it.

And the Department of Education has launched a new initiative with a handful of tribes called the Native Youth Community Projects. And the idea is, we're working with tribes to give schools and students intensive support across a range of areas, from nutrition to mental health, to culturally relevant curriculum. We know that learning about the history

and language and traditions of one's people can make a huge difference in a child's education. And in the long run, if it's done right, it will help more of them be prepared for college and careers. We want to help make that happen.

Number three, to cultivate the next generation of Native leaders, we're creating a national network called Generations Indigenous to remove the barriers that stand between young people and opportunity. And the first class of Gen-I Youth Ambassadors are here today. We are launching a new National Tribal Youth Network to connect and support talented young people in your nations. And next year, we will hold the first White House Tribal Youth Gathering. It will look a lot like this conference, only younger. [*Laughter*] That's all right; you see my gray hair. I can't say nothing about that. [*Laughter*]

Number four, the budget I submit to Congress in February will include smarter, stronger investments in several areas that are really important to Native youth, especially education. We're going to invest in connecting tribal schools to high-speed Internet. We're going to fill them with the best teachers and principals. We're going to make sure that children and families get the support they need to stay secure and healthy. And we are going to keep fighting to meet our obligations to your nations.

We're going to fight to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act, because every young person deserves a safe place to live. We're going to keep promoting economic growth in Indian Country, because every young person deserves the chance to work and get ahead.

We're going to keep working with your communities to deal with the very real impacts of climate change. And I want to thank the tribal leaders who have advised me on how to do that as members of my Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience.

I also want to recognize those tribes that have done exceptional work in their response to climate change, including two that we named Climate Action Champions this morning: the Blue Lake Rancheria Tribe and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. And we're going to keep working with all of you to protect your natural resources and restore tribal homelands, resolve disputes over water rights, to make sure your sacred lands are protected for future generations.

The United States shares a sacred bond with our Native nations. We have a sacred responsibility to all our young people, including Native youth. Every day that I have the honor to serve as your President, I will do everything I can to meet that responsibility and honor that trust and to do right by your nations and your children and future generations.

And—[*applause*]. Which brings me back to what I said at the beginning: Because too many promises haven't been kept, I've tried not to overpromise. But when I've made a promise, I've tried to make sure that I meet that commitment. So, when Michelle and I said goodbye to those teenagers in Standing Rock, we told them we wanted to return their hospitality, and we asked them to come visit us at the White House. And a bunch of them told us later they didn't think they were ever going to hear from us again. [*Laughter*] Because they said, you know what, we've had a lot of adults make promises to us that didn't get kept. Well, 2 weeks ago, they came by, and we took them out for pizza. [*Laughter*] And they got a tour of the White House. And they met with officials from across my administration. And everybody here who had a chance to meet them said how terrific they were.

And I understand that on their last night in Washington, their hotel had a blackout, and sitting together in their pajamas in the dark, they did what I understand was a very Lakota thing to do. They wrote a song about their trip. And so I'm going to just go over what the song says. It—here's how it went. [*Laughter*] I'm not going to sing it though. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Sing!

The President. And I'm sure it sounds better in Lakota. [*Laughter*]

It says: "We returned from the White House. We knew without a doubt we were the first of many voices of Indian Country. So, if

you hear this song, listen and learn it to sing along. We are all one family. Let's not make this just a dream."

We're all one family. [*Applause*] We're all one family. Your nations have made extraordinary contributions to this country. Your children represent the best of this country and its future. Together, we can make sure that every Native young person is treated like a valuable member not only of your nation, but of the American family; that every Native young person gets an equal shot at the American Dream.

That's what I'm working for. That's what you're working for. I'm proud every single day to be your partner. "We are all one family. Let's not make this just a dream."

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:38 p.m. in the Capital Hilton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Raina Thiele, Associate Director, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Engagement; and Eric Garner, who died during an attempted arrest by New York City police officers on July 17.

Remarks at the White House College Opportunity Summit
December 4, 2014

The President. Thank you! Please, please have a seat. Thank you so much.

First of all, can everybody please give Chionque a big round of applause for her great story? We are proud of what she has achieved and the spirit that she represents. When it comes to higher education, we spend a lot of time crunching numbers and statistics. But ultimately, what matters—and what has so many of you here today, many of you who have made this your life work—is making sure that bright, motivated young people like Chionque, and all the students who are here, have the chance to go as far as their talents and their work ethic and their dreams can take them.

And that's why we're here today. In January, we held our first College Opportunity Summit with about 140 higher education leaders and organizations over in the White House. This time, we've got so many folks, we had to move to a different building. That is a good sign. [*Laughter*] You would have been a fire hazard over in EEOB. [*Laughter*]

And all we did was ask a simple question: What can we do, collectively, to create more success stories like Chionque's? And you, collectively, have responded in a big way, with commitments to give more of our young people that chance. Private and community colleges, philanthropists and business leaders, heads of nonprofits and heads of school districts. This did not require a single piece of legislation, a single new stream of funding. What it required was a sense of urgency and a sense of focus and a recognition, this should not be a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. Making sure more of our young people have access to higher education and can succeed and complete their work and get their degree, that has to be an American issue. [*Applause*] An American issue.

And this is especially important at a time when we face multiple challenges, both internationally and domestically, challenges that are entirely solvable, but so often don't get solved because rather than having a sense of common good, we focus on our differences. Rather than having a sense of national purpose, a common sense of opportunity, we give in to those forces that drive us apart.

We think about what's happened over the last year, 2 years, 6 years, our economy keeps improving. More Americans are working. More Americans have health care. Manufacturing has grown. The deficit has shrunk. Foreign oil is down. Crime is down. Graduation rates are up. Clean energy is up. So, objectively speaking, America is outpacing most of the world. And when I travel overseas, people look at us with envy and are puzzled as to why there seems to be so much anxiety and frustration inside America.

And my response is that when it comes to our economy, yes, our economy is growing, but we find an increasing divergence between those who have the skills that today's jobs require and those who don't. So the economy becomes more stratified. When it comes to the cost of college, there's a frustration in a middle class that feels like folks at the top can afford it, folks at the bottom get help, there's nobody who's looking out for folks in the middle. And given accelerating costs and the recognition that this is going to be the key ticket to the middle class, that elicits great frustration.

When it comes, as we've seen, unfortunately, in recent days, to our criminal justice system, too many Americans feel deep unfairness when it comes to the gap between our professed ideals and how laws are applied on a day-to-day basis.

I should mention, before I came here I had a chance to speak with Mayor de Blasio in New York, and I commended him for his words yesterday and for the way New Yorkers have been engaging in peaceful protests and being constructive. He was just in the White House with us on Monday, as we started taking some concrete steps to strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and communities of color, and I intend to take more steps with leaders like him in the months ahead. But beyond the specific issue that has to be addressed—making sure that people have confidence that police and law enforcement and prosecutors are serving everybody equally—there's the larger question of restoring a sense of common purpose.

And at the heart of the American ideal is this sense that we're in it together; that nobody is guaranteed success, but everybody has got access to the possibilities of success; and that we are willing to work not just to make sure our own children have pathways to success, but that everybody does; that at some level, everybody is our kid, everybody is our responsibility. We are going to give back to everybody.

And we do that because it's the right thing to do, and we do it because, selfishly, that's how this country is going to advance and everybody is going to be better off. And big challenges like these should galvanize our country. Big challenges like these should unite us around an opportunity agenda that brings us together, rather than pulling us apart.

We are at our best when we rise to what the moment demands, whether it's putting more people back to work, making sure those jobs pay a decent wage so that incomes and wages go up; whether it's educating more of our kids for the 21st century; whether it's fixing our broken immigration system; and to do what many of you have done and made as the cause of your life, and that is, opening the doors of higher education to more of our fellow Americans. These are big challenges, but they are solvable as long as we feel a sense of urgency and we work together.

And that's why I was so heartened by the January meeting, and that's why I'm even more encouraged by this meeting.

Our higher education system is one of the things that makes America exceptional. There's no place else that has the assets we do when it comes to higher education. People from all over the world aspire to come here and study here. And that is a good thing.

America thrived in the 20th century because we made high school free. We sent a generation to college. We cultivated the most educated workforce in the world. Along with our innovation mentality, our risk-taking, our entrepreneurial spirit, it was that foundation that we laid—broad-based, mass education—that drove our economy and separated us from the rest of the world. Nothing was more important—the skills of our people, the investment we made in human capital. We were ahead of the curve.

But what's happened is, other countries figured it out. They took a look at our policies, and they figured out the secret sauce. [*Laughter*] They set out to educate their own kids so they could outcompete ours, understanding that in today's knowledge economy, jobs and businesses will go wherever you can find the most skilled, educated workers. Now, I don't want them—I don't want businesses to have to look anywhere other than the United States of America. I want to make sure we lead the world in education once again, not just because

it's right to help more young people chase their dreams, but because it's critical to our economic future.

Now, the reason we're here is because we understand that although at the top end, our universities are doing unbelievable work and are still the envy of the world, for a lot of working families, for a lot of middle class kids, a lot of folks who are trying to join that middle class, higher education increasingly feels out of reach. You—a lot of college quads may not look like they've changed much over the last century. The people who attended them have. There are more minorities. There are more first-generation college goers. Working adults are returning to get degrees so that they can reach for opportunities that right now are foreclosed to them. Students are more likely than in the past to study part time. They hold full-time jobs. They have families. We used to think of these as atypical students; today, they're increasingly the norm.

But too many students who take the crucial step of enrolling in college don't actually finish, which means they leave with the burden of debt, without the earnings and the job benefits of a degree. So we've got to change that. All of us have a stake in changing that.

On the one hand, we've got good news, which is, 20, 30, 40, 50 years ago, college was still seen as a luxury; now everybody understands some form of higher education is a necessity. And that's a good thing, which means more folks are enrolling and more folks are seeking the skills that they'll need to compete. But if they're simply enrolling and not graduating, if they're enrolling and not getting the skills that they need, then we're not delivering on the promise. In fact, we're adding another burden to these folks.

And I get letters all the time seeing what that burden means, heartbreaking letters that I'll get sometimes from kids who thought they were doing the right thing, have $50,000, $60,000, $70,000 worth of debt, now feel as if they made a bad mistake trying to get a higher education. Now, as a nation, we don't promise equal outcomes, but we were founded on the idea everybody should have an equal opportunity to succeed. No matter who you are, what you look like, where you come from, you can make it. That's an essential promise of America. Where you start should not determine where you end up. And so I'm glad that everybody wants to go to college. You are too. But I want to make sure that it actually works for them.

And what that means is that we're going to have to make sure that more students can make it all the way across the graduation stage, not with debt that might limit their choices, but with the skills that will prepare them for the workforce. That's going to be critical.

It's why we're going to have to help more college—more families afford college. And that's why we've offered grants and tax credits that go farther than before. We've helped over 700 community college partners with over 1,000 employers to provide training for good jobs that need to be filled. We've reformed student loans so that more money goes to students rather than banks. And I took executive actions to—[*applause*]—took an executive action to give Americans the chance to cap their direct student loan payments at 10 percent of their monthly income so people can pursue careers that may not be wildly lucrative, but are critically important to our society.

One thing we certainly shouldn't be doing is making it harder for more striving young kids to finish their education and depriving America of their talents and discoveries. And I bring this up because there's a bill that Republican leadership in the House are voting—have brought up that would force talented young people and productive workers and community leaders to leave our country. The immigration issue is, I recognize, one that generates a lot of passion, but it does not make sense for us to want to push talent out rather than make sure that they're staying here and contributing to society. So—[*applause*].

Rather than deport students and separate families and make it harder for law enforcement to do its job, I just want Congress to work with us to pass a commonsense law to fix that broken immigration system. And there's a lot that Congress could do to help more young

people access and afford higher education. I'd like to see us spend more time on that.

But in the meantime, there's a lot that you and I can do together even if Congress doesn't act. So that's why we convened the College Opportunity Summit in January, calling for action. We've already seen a lot of progress. More than 2,000 colleges are waiving application fees for low-income students. That's a big deal. Georgia State University, just to cite one example, is developing a new system to give small grants to students who might be a little behind on their bills. You've got the Posse Foundation planning to provide over 500 STEM scholarships over the next 5 years.

And what we heard from you is that in order to meet our goal of producing many more college graduates, we've got to draw on all of higher education, which means community colleges, big public universities, small liberal arts colleges. Everybody has got to be a part of the solution. And so that's what we did. Now hundreds of you have announced new commitments. I'm going to highlight a few of them in four different areas that we know are critical to student success. So you guys can pat yourselves on the back—[*laughter*]—as I mention some of the work that's been done as a consequence of this convening.

First, you told us that colleges and universities want to work together on these challenges. So, rather than settle for islands of excellence, we asked you to collaborate and build networks where you can share best practices, test them out, and get a greater collective impact.

The National Association of System Heads, for example, has organized 11 State systems of colleges and universities behind one big goal, and that is to produce 350,000 more graduates by 2025. The University Innovation Alliance, which is a group of 11 public research universities from all over the country, has committed to producing 68,000 more college graduates by 2025.

And so what's happening is, these groups are partnering to develop and test new ideas like improving remedial math classes for underprepared students, using data and technology to figure out when a student may not have chosen the right major or is having trouble making it to class regularly so that they can intervene early, guide that student back on track. Maybe they need text messages reminding them to go to class—[*laughter*]—not a bad idea. [*Laughter*] Maybe they need to be paired up with a peer tutor.

My mom had an analog version of this. [*Laughter*] She used to wake me up when I was living overseas before dawn, and she'd make me study every morning and make sure I was keeping up with my English lessons. And it worked. And so nagging works. [*Laughter*] It does. Michelle and I are big believers in nagging. [*Laughter*]

Second, we know that the path to college begins long before students set on campus. We need our school leaders working with college presidents to make sure students are on track for college, that they're taking the right courses, filling out the right financial aid forms, applying to more schools, making sure they're prepared. That's what drives many of your promising tutoring and mentoring organizations. And that's why school districts and community organizations are partnering with colleges and universities to make sure that the pipeline is working, that low-income students are better prepared to succeed in college. So the Riverside County Education Collaboration in California has set a goal of increasing FAFSA completion by 30 percent, and they're working to ensure that fewer students need remedial classes when they get to college.

Third, we know that a lot of young people, especially low-income students, need a little more support and guidance as they prepare for and apply to college. This is something that Michelle is passionate about, because she knows firsthand the difference a good counselor can make for a kid who may be the first in her family to go to college. So Michelle is going to talk more about this and her Reach Higher initiative later today. I know that you will enjoy hearing her more than me. [*Laughter*] That's what happens. [*Laughter*] But both of us—just to give you a little preview—want to make sure that every child gets the kind of support that Malia and Sasha get.

And finally, we know that many of the high-tech, high-wage jobs of the future are going to be in STEM: science, technology, engineering, math. Many of you have committed to increasing the number of women and underrepresented minorities who pursue STEM studies. Some of you have pledged to prepare more K-through-12 teachers in STEM so they can inspire our future innovators. Others are engaging middle, high school, and college students in hands-on math and science learning to spark an interest in STEM careers.

So these are just a few examples, a small sample of the commitments that all of you have already announced, and we're looking forward to seeing what comes out of the work that you engage in in the coming months. And in the meantime, my administration is going to keep doing our part to support your efforts.

Today we're announcing a handful of executive actions that we can take immediately to expand college opportunity, including prioritizing grants for evidence-based projects, sponsoring research on improving college completion, increasing the number of AmeriCorps service opportunities to help more low-income students access college.

And our challenge going forward is to make sure your outstanding commitments mean something where it matters most: in the lives of young people. That's what Jeff Nelson, a former teacher who's here today, wanted to do. Where's Jeff? There he is, right here. I'm going to brag on Jeff for a second. [*Laughter*] Seven years ago, he cofounded a nonprofit called OneGoal. And it had one goal—[*laughter*]—and so is aptly named—to help more low-performing, low-income high school students not only get into college, but make sure they've got the continued support to succeed once they get to college.

And one of their students is a young man from Chicago named Caleb Navarro. Is Caleb here too? Couldn't make it?

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]—still hear.

The President. Well, next time you've got to bring him. [*Laughter*] But he'll hear about it that I was talking about him? I'll bet he will. [*Laughter*]

So, by the time Caleb was a sophomore, he wasn't doing all that well in school. He wasn't motivated to try harder; starting to give up on himself. The folks at OneGoal saw a spark of something that was special in Caleb. Once he joined their program, he started to believe that maybe he was capable of achieving more. Expert teachers helped him focus on academics and taught him how to stick with his studies, even when it was hard. Caleb started taking AP classes, something he wouldn't have imagined for himself a couple years earlier. He gave up his lunch hour to take an extra class. Now, that's serious, giving up your lunch hour. [*Laughter*] He started out with a GPA of 2.4, ended up with a 3.8 GPA. Today, Caleb is a freshman at Dominican University, studying biochemistry, on track to graduate from college.

Now, Caleb could have been on his way to becoming just another statistic. He was a good kid, so it might not have been that he completely crashed and burned. But what was likely, the trajectory was one in which he underestimated what was possible. He shortchanged himself. He lowered his expectations. And because of just some key interventions at a critical moment in his life, he's now studying stuff that I don't understand. [*Laughter*]

And if we can replicate Caleb's story, if everybody who's represented here, each of you are touching 10, 50, 100, 1,000 Calebs all across the country in a sustained way, figuring out what works, being honest when the evidence says something doesn't work and trying something different, investing in these kids in a sustained way, teaching each other how to have an impact—if we can replicate Caleb's story across the country, imagine what discoveries he and students like him might make; what businesses they may start; what entire industries may be launched; what new sources of energy may be discovered; what lifesaving medicines might be produced; what a set of Calebs can do to change the world.

That's the power, that's the purpose of higher education: to give everybody that chance. Because everybody has got that spark. Some know it earlier; others know it later. I happen

to be an example of somebody who—it came a little later. [*Laughter*] But everybody has got a Caleb out there. And we've got to make sure that they have the chance not only to fulfill their potential, but by doing so, creating that chance for us to fulfill this country's potential.

We are coming out of this recession with the most diverse, most digitally fluent, in many ways, most sophisticated generation in American history. Anybody who's interacting with young people today comes away impressed. But they're also concerned, because these kids are growing up at a time when a lot of people have lost faith in institutions and are inherently skeptical about what's possible. And I want to make sure young people with that spark never lose sense of what's possible.

If all of us work together—teachers, parents, nonprofits, corporations, school districts, university system—if we make sure they remain the best educated generation in American history, there is no limit to what they can achieve, there's no limit to what this country can achieve.

So I want to thank you all for the important work you do. Stay at it. And I look forward to seeing you at the next summit.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:17 p.m. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Scholar Chionque Mines, who introduced the President; and Jeff Nelson, cofounder and chief executive officer, One Goal.

Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree
December 4, 2014

Merry Christmas, everybody! We saw this party going on out back and we thought we'd join you.

I want to thank Secretary Jewell for not only the introduction, but for all that you and everybody who's part of the Interior Department and the Park Service do to protect the magnificent outdoors for our children and for future generations. And I want to thank Jonathan Jarvis, Dan Wenk, and everybody at the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation for putting on this special event each and every holiday season.

I want everybody to give it up for our charming Christmas hosts tonight, Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson. We have so enjoyed the incredible performers, including the one and only Patti LaBelle. And finally, thanks to all of you who are here and watching at home for joining us to celebrate this wonderful holiday tradition.

Back in 1923, school kids here in Washington wrote a letter to the White House asking if they could put a Christmas tree on the South Lawn. And more than 90 years and a few different evergreens later—[*laughter*]—the National Christmas Tree still stands as a symbol of hope and holiday spirit, and we still gather as a country each year to light it.

We still have school kids involved too. But this year, they've given all the State and territory trees surrounding the National Christmas Tree their first digital upgrade. Young women from all 50 States used their computers, using their coding skills to control the colors and patterns of the lights on these trees. So thanks to those wonderful students. It is incredibly impressive. It's actually one of the few things that Tom Hanks cannot do. [*Laughter*]

But while lighting the tree has entered into the 21st century, the story that we remember this season dates back more than 2,000 years. It's the story of hope: the birth of a singular child into the simplest of circumstances, a child who would grow up to live a life of humility and kindness and compassion, who traveled with a message of empathy and understanding, who taught us to care for the poor and the marginalized and those who are different from ourselves. And more than two millennia later, the way he lived still compels us to do our best

to build a more just and tolerant and decent world.

It's a story dear to my family as Christians, but its meaning is one embraced by all peoples across our country and around the world, regardless of how they pray or whether they pray at all. And that's to love our neighbors as ourselves, to be one another's keepers, to have faith in one another and in something better around the bend. Not just at Christmastime, but all the time.

And finally, this Christmas, we count our blessings and we give thanks to the men and women of our military, who help make those blessings possible. And as we hold our loved ones tight, let's remember the military families whose loved ones are far from home. They are our heroes, and they deserve our heartfelt gratitude and our wholehearted support.

So, on behalf of Michelle, Malia, Sasha, mom-in-law—[*laughter*]—and our reindeer Bo and Sunny—[*laughter*]—I want to wish all of them and I want to wish all of you a very, very merry Christmas and a holiday filled with joy.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:12 p.m. on the Ellipse at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Daniel Wenk, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park; and actors Thomas J. Hanks and his wife Margarita Wilson Hanks, who cohosted the event. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Remarks on the Nomination of Ashton B. Carter To Be Secretary of Defense
December 5, 2014

The President. Good morning, everybody. Please have a seat. It is wonderful to be able to announce not the creation, but at least the filling of one new job. [*Laughter*] But before we do, I wanted to make a somewhat broader statement about the economy. And Ash is willing to indulge me.

National Economy

Last month, America's businesses created more than 300,000 jobs. Now, this keeps a pace so far this year that we have not seen since the 1990s. So far this year, over the first 11 months of 2014, our economy has created 2.65 million jobs. That's more than in any entire year since the 1990s. Our businesses have now created 10.9 million jobs over the past 57 months in a row. And that's the longest streak of private sector job growth on record.

We also know that the pickup in the pace of job growth this year has been in industries with higher wages. And overall, wages are rising, a very welcome sign for millions of Americans. So we've got an opportunity to keep up this progress if Congress is willing to keep our Government open, avoid self-inflicted wounds, and work together to invest in the things that support faster job growth in high-paying jobs. And that means exports, infrastructure, streamlining our Tax Code, immigration reform, giving minimum wage workers a raise.

And it's been a long road to recovery from the worst economic crisis in generations, and we still have a lot more work to do to make sure that hard-working Americans' wages are growing faster. But the United States continues to outpace most of the world. Over the last 4 years, we've put more people back to work than Europe, Japan, and all other industrialized advanced countries combined. And we're going to keep at it until every single American who is willing and able to work can find not just any job, but a job that pays a decent wage and allows them to support their families.

But it's worth us every once in a while reflecting on the fact that the American economy is making real progress. And if we can continue in this trajectory, if we can continue to grow robustly, and if we make sure that those companies who are seeing profits that are probably higher than any time in the last 60 years, that they're also making sure that their workers are sharing in that growth, then we can get a

virtuous cycle that's really going to make a difference and be a critical component of strengthening our national security, because national security starts with a strong economy here at home.

Secretary of Defense Nomination

Now, I know that some people think that I announce Cabinet positions on fake Twitter accounts. [*Laughter*] This is not the case.

A year ago, when Ash Carter completed his tenure as Deputy Secretary of Defense, Secretary Hagel took to the podium in Ash's farewell ceremony and looked out at the audience of our civilian and military leaders, and he said: "I've known Ash Carter for many years. All of us here today have benefited from Ash's hard work, his friendship, from his inspiration, and from his leadership." And Chuck then went on to express his gratitude to his partner for "what Ash has done for this country and will continue to do in many ways." Couldn't have said it better myself.

Today I'm pleased to announce my nominee to be our next Secretary of Defense, Mr. Ash Carter.

Now, with a record of service that has spanned more than 30 years—as a public servant, as an adviser, as a scholar—Ash is rightly regarded as one of our Nation's foremost national security leaders. As a top member of our Pentagon team for the first 5 years of my Presidency, including his 2 years as Deputy Secretary, he was at the table in the Situation Room; he was by my side navigating complex security challenges that we were confronting. I relied on his expertise, and I relied on his judgment. I think it's fair to say that, Ash, in your 1-year attempt at retirement from public service, you've failed miserably. [*Laughter*] But I am deeply grateful that you're willing to go back at it.

Ash, as some of you know, brings a unique blend of strategic perspective and technical know-how. As a student of history, he understands the United States—and I'm quoting him now—is "the single most [important]* provider of security in the world," and he played a key role in devising our defense strategy to advance that security. He's also a physicist, which means that he's one of the few people who actually understand how many of our defense systems work. [*Laughter*] And that has also allowed him to serve with extraordinary breadth and also depth in a whole range of work that we've had to do.

In one way or another, Ash has served under 11 Secretaries of Defense. He's an innovator who helped create the program that has dismantled weapons of mass destruction around the world and reduced the threat of nuclear terrorism. He's a reformer who's never been afraid to cancel old or inefficient weapons programs. He knows the Department of Defense inside and out, all of which means that on day one, he's going to hit the ground running.

Ash is also known by our allies and our friends around the world. Having served both Republican and Democratic Secretaries, he's respected and trusted on both sides of the aisle. He's been a close partner with our military leaders. And he's admired by civilian leaders across the Department because he's a mentor to so many of them.

Now, there's one other quality of Ash's service that I think often gets overlooked, and that is his true regard, his love, for the men and women in uniform and their families, his relentless dedication to their safety and well-being. When he cut outdated, unneeded systems, he did it because he was trying to free up money for our troops to make sure that they had the weapons and the gear that they needed and the quality of life for themselves and their families that they deserve.

When our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan were struggling to defend against roadside bombs, he moved heaven and earth to rush them new body armor and vehicles. It's no exaggeration to say that there are countless Americans who are alive today in part because of Ash's efforts. When our forces sat down for Thanksgiving dinner far from home or as our wounded warriors recovered in the hospital or

* White House correction.

when our fallen heroes returned to Dover, Ash was there, often on his own time, without any publicity or fanfare. And I know that Ash will be there for them now as Secretary of Defense.

We face no shortage of challenges to our national security. Our combat mission in Afghanistan ends this month, and we have to transition to a new mission of advising and assisting Afghan forces and going after remnants of Al Qaida's core. We have to keep degrading, and ultimately destroying, ISIL in Iraq and Syria. We have to build counterterrorism partnerships and new platforms. We have to continue the fight against Ebola in West Africa. We have to continue to strengthen our alliances, including NATO and continue rebalancing our defense posture in the Asia-Pacific.

Going forward, our Armed Forces are, necessarily, going to need to be leaner, but as Commander in Chief, I'm going to make sure that we have a military that is second to none, that continues to be the greatest fighting force in the history of the world.

That means, though, we're going to have to bolster some new capabilities, our cyberdefenses, how we deal with our satellites and how we're adapting our military and investing in new capabilities to meet long-term threats. We're going to have to work with Congress on a more responsible approach to defense spending, including the reforms we need to make the Department more efficient. That's how we're going to preserve readiness. That's how we're going to keep faith with our forces and our families. That's how we're going to deliver world-class care to our wounded warriors.

And Ash is going to be critical to all these efforts. When we talked about this job, we talked about how we're going to have to make smart choices precisely because there are so many challenges out there. And we're going to have to squeeze everything we have out of the resources that we have in order to be as effective as possible. And I can't think of somebody who's more qualified to do that.

In his career, Ash has been confirmed by the Senate three times. If it were entirely up to my dear friend Carl Levin, who's sitting here, I suspect it would happen really quickly—[*laughter*]—because that's the kind of guy Carl is, and Carl, I know, has had a chance to work with Ash in the past. My hope is, is that in the new Congress, we get similar speed and dispatch.

By the way, we will miss Carl Levin. I just wanted to mention that.

One last piece of critical information that may have tipped the scales in me wanting to promote Ash. Ash is a big Motown fan. [*Laughter*] And one of his favorites is a classic by the Four Tops, "Reach Out, I'll Be There." So, Ash, I'm reaching out to you. [*Laughter*] You have been there for us, our troops, our families, our Nation.

I also know that he's been there for his lovely wife Stephanie, sometimes by Skype because he's been traveling. [*Laughter*] But the sacrifices that Stephanie has been willing to make—this is a team effort, as it is true for our military families. And so we're very grateful to Stephanie. She joined Ash on a lot of those Thanksgiving trips to see our troops and at the bedside of wounded warriors. She knows the sacrifices they're going through.

Stephanie, we thank you for your service. We thank Will and Ava, who couldn't be here, but we know that they couldn't be prouder of their dad.

And with that, I want to let, hopefully, our soon-to-be new Secretary of Defense say a few words.

Secretary-designate Carter. Thank you, Mr. President. And, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, it's an honor and a privilege for me to be nominated for the position of Secretary of Defense. General Scowcroft, my longtime mentor, thank you for being here. And thanks to another longtime mentor, Bill Perry, who can't be here today. And thanks to you, Chairman, and many other friends and colleagues, past and future, for coming out today.

I accepted the President's offer to be nominated for Secretary of Defense because of my regard for his leadership. I accepted it because of the seriousness of the strategic challenges we face, but also the bright opportunities that exist for America if we can come together to grab hold of them. And I accepted the offer

because of the deep respect and abiding love that Stephanie and I have for our men and women in uniform.

As we talked together in the past weeks, Mr. President, we discussed the challenges and the opportunities, and the need both to keep America safe and to make a better future for our children. If confirmed in this job, I pledge to you my most candid strategic advice. And I pledge also that you will receive equally candid military advice.

And finally, to the greatest fighting force the world has ever known, to you, I pledge to keep faith with you and to serve our Nation with the same unflinching dedication that you demonstrate every day.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:24 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Secretary-designate Carter referred to former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft; former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry; and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, USA.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With King Abdullah II of Jordan
December 5, 2014

President Obama. Well, it's a great pleasure once again to welcome my friend, His Majesty King Abdullah, and the delegation from Jordan here to the Oval Office.

Jordan is one of our most effective and capable and steadfast partners in not only the Middle East, but around the world. And my personal friendship with His Majesty is something that I greatly appreciate. I always enjoy talking to him both for his honesty and his good counsel.

We had an extensive discussion about some of the challenge that we face in the region. At the top of the list obviously was our efforts to debilitate and ultimately destroy ISIL both in Iraq and in Syria. Jordan has been a rock-solid partner in that coalition to defeat ISIL. And the Jordanian military has been working side by side with U.S. and other militaries from around the world in making slow, but steady progress, providing assistance to Baghdad, providing assistance to the moderate opposition inside of Syria, and to begin rolling back some of the gains that ISIL has made.

We recognize it's a long-term and extremely complex challenge, but it's one that we feel optimistic we'll be able to succeed at. And I stressed my strong gratitude to His Majesty for all the efforts that his men and women in uniform have made.

We also had a chance to talk about the fact that this is not just a military campaign, this is also diplomatic and a social and political effort, that it's a matter of winning over hearts and minds and isolating the extremists in the region. And I think Jordan is an important leader in that. And His Majesty shared with me some of the ideas about organizing within Islam to make sure that the overwhelming majority of peace-loving Muslims are able to, within their region and within their own communities, step by step isolate and ultimately eradicate this strain that has done so much damage in the region.

We had a chance to discuss some of the other regional issues that are of great importance. We share a concern about continuing tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, and Jordan has been a strong partner in working with us to try to broker a genuine two-state solution and peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Obviously, in the aftermath of Gaza and some of the challenges in Jerusalem, the environment has not been conducive for the sort of peace initiatives that we'd like to see, but we are going to continue to share ideas, recognizing that ultimately, what's going to be good for the Israelis and the Palestinians is their capacity to live together side by side in peace and security and for Palestinians to have their own state.

We had a—I briefed His Majesty about our negotiations with Iran and indicated to him

that we would prefer no deal to a bad deal, but that we continue to hold out the possibility that we can eliminate the risk of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon and give Iran an opportunity to rejoin the community of nations. Whether Iran seizes that opportunity or not is something that we have not yet been able to determine, but we will keep on trying over the next several months. And we will continue to keep Jordan apprised.

And we had a chance to discuss some of the important security issues that extend beyond Syria and Iraq, including Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, what's happening in North Africa, and how we can more effectively craft the kind of working partnerships and coalitions to counter terror wherever it may appear.

Because Jordan is such an important partner, because they are carrying such an important burden, including accommodating hundreds of thousands of Syrians who've been displaced because of the Syrian civil war, I am very proud of the continued support that we've been able to provide Jordan, a small, resource-poor country, but one that consistently steps up and meets its responsibilities. And as a consequence, I told His Majesty here today that we are going to continue with a memorandum of understanding, but that we are actually going to be increasing the amounts to a billion dollars a year, and that we are going to be providing an additional loan guarantee, all of which is designed to reinforce the sort of political and economic reforms that are taking place inside of Jordan so that not only can the people of Jordan prosper and be self-sufficient, but they can continue to provide an anchor for important efforts that enhance U.S. national security over the long term.

So, Your Majesty, you're a great friend and partner, and we very much appreciate the visit. We wish you and your family well. His Majesty's son is a student here, and I understand just finished classes, so hopefully, he'll be able to enjoy a good holiday season, although I understand exams are actually after the holidays. That's always a bad deal. But—[*laughter*].

King Abdullah. It is.

President Obama. It means he's got to do a little bit of studying during the break.

But it's wonderful to see you. Good. Thank you.

King Abdullah. Thank you. Well, if you'll allow me, Mr. President, thank you very much on behalf of all of us in Jordan, to thank you, the American people, and Congress for, as you mentioned, the very gracious support to Jordan, the budget support of revenue, which comes at a very difficult time, as you mentioned, of us hosting almost 1.5 million Syrian refugees, 20 percent of our population. And this will have a tremendous impact on Jordanians on all levels. So, from all of us, a very gracious thank you to you and your people for this very timely support for our country.

Obviously, Jordanians and Americans have been standing shoulder to shoulder against extremism for many years, but to a new level with this coalition against ISIL. And our troops are very proud to be working together in combating ISIL in Syria as well as in Iraq. We are working together to support our friends in Iraq and the Iraqi Government. And this is something that we will continue to do with great pride.

As the President alluded to, that we have a long-term commitment to bring a comprehensive solution to the Syrian crisis. I believe that the process is moving in the right direction, and we have spent some time on seeing how we can move the process forward.

We'd also like to thank the President very much on his continued efforts to bring the Israelis and Palestinians closer together, because obviously, we need to be able to find a solution between the Israelis and Palestinians as we have moved to now this global challenge of extremism that all of us face—Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus—all of us together against—this fight against evil.

So this is now a generational fight where all of us are fighting extremism all over the world, and we all have to fight together as a united front.

So we're very proud of this relationship with the United States. And as the President alluded to, it's not just—although the priority is against ISIL, it's actually across our region. And I'm

very proud of this relationship, very proud of our personal friendship, and of the President's vision to alleviate the suffering of the region and his steadfast commitment to Muslims across the world to fight this extremist threat.

President Obama. Thank you very much. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II of Jordan, who is a student at Georgetown University. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Newly Elected Governors
December 5, 2014

Well, it is a great pleasure to welcome these newly elected Governors to the Oval Office. They represent a wide variety of States, but they all have a common interest, and that is, making sure that their constituents—who are also my constituents—are able to gain opportunity, work hard, prosper, feel secure. And that happens best when we work together, whether we're talking about Democrats and Republicans and Independents working together or whether we're talking about State, Federal, and local officials working together.

So I'm looking forward to having a great conversation with them on how we can build on some of the progress that's already been made. This morning we had a great jobs report showing over 300,000 new jobs created. We now have seen 57 straight months of private-sector job growth and the most jobs created this year since the 1990s. That's due to a lot of factors, but the main reason is because we've got great businesses and great workers. But what we want to make sure is that government is not an impediment, but is instead an accelerant of that kind of job growth, and I know that all the Governors here feel the same way.

So I'm looking forward to talking to them about how we can help on education, transportation, the health and safety of their people. And my main message to them is that we're here to help. The good news about Governors is, they usually don't have time to be ideological because people expect them to deliver. And that's very much my attitude going into my last 2 years of office. So I look forward to having an opportunity to get to know all of them individually, but also to be able to deliver on behalf of their people. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:58 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were Gov. William M. Walker of Alaska; and Governors-elect Bruce V. Rauner of Illinois, Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., of Maryland, Charles D. Baker of Massachusetts, Thomas W. Wolf of Pennsylvania, Gina M. Raimondo of Rhode Island, and Gregory W. Abbott of Texas.

Statement on the First Anniversary of the Death of Former President Nelson R. Mandela of South Africa
December 5, 2014

On this first anniversary of the passing of Nelson Mandela, Michelle and I send our thoughts and prayers to the Mandela family and all South Africans. One year ago, the world lost a leader whose struggle and sacrifices inspired us to stand up for our fundamental principles, whose example reminded us of the enduring need for compassion, understanding, and reconciliation, and whose vision saw the promise of a better world. As we pause today to remember the legacy of Madiba, I hope we can all take a moment to reflect on how Mandela's life has

inspired our own and will impact the paths of generations to come, including the next generation of world leaders, as while Mandela left behind a world more just and free, there is much more work to be done. On this day, and on every day, we honor his spirit and his memory.

The President's Weekly Address
December 6, 2014

Hi, everybody. Just in time for the holiday season, we now have another piece of good news about the pace of our economic recovery. Last month, our businesses created 314,000 new jobs. And that's not a fluke. It keeps up the solid pace of job creation we've seen all year long. November was the 10th month in a row we've added more than 200,000 jobs. So far this year, our economy has created 2.65 million new jobs. That's the most of any year since the 1990s, even with a full month to go. All told, our businesses have created 10.9 million new jobs over the past 57 months. And that's the longest streak of private-sector job creation on record.

We also know that the upswing in job growth this year has come in industries with higher wages. Overall, wages are on the rise. And that's some very welcome news for millions of hard-working Americans. Because even though corporate profits and the stock market have hit alltime highs, the typical family isn't bringing home more than they did 15 years ago. And that still has to change. And a vibrant jobs market gives us the opportunity to keep up this progress and begin to undo that decades-long middle class squeeze.

But first, we need the outgoing Congress to pass a budget and keep our Government open. A Christmas shutdown is not a good idea. Then, when the new Congress convenes in January, we need to work together to invest in the things that support faster growth in higher paying jobs.

Building new roads and bridges creates jobs. Growing our exports creates jobs. Reforming our outdated tax system and our broken immigration system creates jobs. Raising the minimum wage would benefit nearly 28 million American workers, giving them more money to spend at local businesses, and that helps those businesses create jobs.

America, we still have a lot of work to do together. But we do have real, tangible evidence of our progress: 10.9 million new jobs, 10 million more Americans with health insurance. Manufacturing has grown. Our deficits have shrunk. Our dependence on foreign oil is down. Clean energy is up. More young Americans are graduating from high school and earning college degrees than ever before. Over the last 4 years, this country has put more people back to work than Europe, Japan, and every advanced economy combined.

The United States of America continues to outperform much of the world. And we are going to keep it up until every American feels the gains of a growing economy where it matters most: in your lives.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:15 p.m. on December 5 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on December 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 5, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 6.

Statement on the Death of Luke Somers
December 6, 2014

The United States strongly condemns the barbaric murder of Luke Somers at the hands of Al Qaida terrorists during a rescue operation conducted by U.S. forces in Yemen in partnership with the Yemeni Government. On behalf of the American people, I offer my deepest

condolences to Luke's family and to his loved ones. I also offer my thoughts and prayers to the family of a non-U.S. citizen hostage who was also murdered by these terrorists during the rescue operation. Their despair and sorrow at this time are beyond words.

It is my highest responsibility to do everything possible to protect American citizens. As this and previous hostage rescue operations demonstrate, the United States will spare no effort to use all of its military, intelligence, and diplomatic capabilities to bring Americans home safely, wherever they are located. And terrorists who seek to harm our citizens will feel the long arm of American justice.

Luke Somers was kidnapped 15 months ago in Yemen and held hostage by Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Since his capture, the United States has been using every tool at our disposal to secure his release. Earlier this week, a video released by his terrorist captors announced that Luke would be killed within 72 hours. Other information also indicated that Luke's life was in imminent danger. Based on this assessment, and as soon as there was reliable intelligence and an operational plan, I authorized a rescue attempt yesterday. I also authorized the rescue of any other hostages held in the same location as Luke.

Luke was a photojournalist who sought through his images to convey the lives of Yemenis to the outside world. He came to Yemen in peace and was held against his will and threatened by a despicable terrorist organization. The callous disregard for Luke's life is more proof of the depths of AQAP's depravity and further reason why the world must never cease in seeking to defeat their evil ideology.

As Commander in Chief, I am grateful to the U.S. forces who carried out this mission, as well as the previous attempt to rescue Luke, and to the dedicated intelligence, law enforcement, and diplomatic professionals who supported their efforts. I also deeply appreciate the support and assistance provided by President Hadi and the Yemeni Government and reiterate our strong commitment to combating the shared threat posed by AQAP.

We remember Luke and his family, as well as the families of those Americans who are still being held captive overseas and those who have lost loved ones to the brutality of these and other terrorists. We remain determined to do our utmost to bring them home and to hold those who have done them harm accountable.

NOTE: The statement referred to Pierre Korkie, a South African teacher who was kidnapped in Yemen in May 2013.

Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception
December 7, 2014

The President. Well, good evening, everybody.

Audience members. Good evening.

The President. Welcome to the White House. Michelle and I love this event. Everybody looks so nice. [*Laughter*] This is one of our favorites. And as Lily used to say, that's the truth. [*Laughter*] Now, I—as a President, I cannot stick out my tongue. That might cause an international incident.

But I want to start the evening by thanking David Rubenstein and the Kennedy Center Trustees and the Kennedy Center's new President, Deborah Rutter. Where's Deborah? Yay! I want to thank George and Michael Stevens, who produce this event every year. Lately, they've won an Emmy for it just about every year as well. So we are very proud to have them here. In fact, Michelle and I call this the "Stevens season." [*Laughter*]

President Kennedy once wrote, "The life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of a nation, is very close to the center of a nation's purpose—and is a test of the quality of a nation's civilization."

I think Tom Hanks will agree that President Kennedy was probably envisioning "Joe Versus the Volcano" when he wrote that. [*Laughter*] Although, I have to say, "Big" was on last night. And that—you know, so things balance out.

[*Laughter*] But it's clear that the group on stage with me tonight understands what President Kennedy understood: that our art is a reflection of us not just as people, but as a nation. It binds us together. Songs and dance and film express our triumphs and our faults, our strengths, our tenderness in ways that sometimes words simply cannot do. And so we honor those who have dedicated their lives to this endeavor: those who have tapped into something previously unspoken or unsung or unexpressed; those who have shown us not simply who they are, but who we all are; those who are able to tap into those things we have in common and not just those things that push us apart.

Now, I'm going to start with somebody who I know all of you think about whenever I sing, and that's Reverend Al Green. [*Laughter*] I've been keeping his traditions alive. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Do it again. Do it again.

The President. No, I'm not going to do it again. I'm not going to do it. [*Laughter*] No. No. That was, like, a one-time thing. My voice didn't crack. It was a fluke. I can sing a little, but I cannot sing like Al Green. Nobody can sing like Al Green. Nobody can sing like Al Green. [*Applause*] Nobody can sing like Al Green. That soul, that light falsetto. His music can bring people together. In fact, he says he can hardly go anywhere without a fan coming up to him, pulling out a picture of one of their kids, and telling him which one of his songs helped that child enter the world. [*Laughter*] I embarrassed the Reverend. Look at him, he's all, like, "Oh man." [*Laughter*]

Al was born in Forrest City, Arkansas, one of 10 kids packed into a 2-bedroom house. In his early twenties, he signed with Hi Records and helped bring Memphis soul into the spotlight with songs like "Tired of Being Alone."

Audience member. Mm-hmm.

The President. Mm-hmm. "Let's Stay Together," "Take Me to the River."

Audience members. Mmm. [*Laughter*]

The President. They're thinking about all those songs and how it brought people together. [*Laughter*] In the 1970s, he became a pastor at his church in Memphis, and later, he started churning out a string of gospel hits that earned him eight Grammys. And as the years passed, he's woven together his gospel and soul careers, recently collaborating with the Roots, John Legend, and his Memphis neighbor, Justin Timberlake. [*Laughter*] And of course, he's still singing from the pulpit on Sunday. As he says, "The greatest thing that ever happened to me . . . the little boy from Arkansas, was that amidst all the doubts . . . I found peace." For the peace he found and the soul he has shared with all of us, tonight we honor the Reverend Al Green.

On the night of Patricia McBride's farewell performance at the New York City Ballet, the crowd showered her with 13,000 roses. Thankfully, they cut the thorns off first. [*Laughter*] And that is fitting, because when you hear about Patricia, you hear about somebody who is all rose and no thorn, legendary for her good cheer, her sweetness, her unabashed joyfulness. And that personality translated to the stage, where her humor and grace was matched only by her power and stamina and incredible athleticism. She's one of the most versatile dancers we've ever seen.

Patricia became the principal dancer at the New York City Ballet when she was just 18 years old, the youngest to ever hold that role, and she kept at it for 28 years, longer than anybody else in history. By the time she was finished, some of our greatest choreographers had written dozens of pieces just for her, which is not bad for a shy young girl who grew up in the shadow of World War II, putting glue on the toes of her dance shoes to make them last longer.

She's the daughter of a single mom who worked as a bank secretary in a day when most mothers didn't work outside the home, who pinched pennies from that job and paid the 75 cents for each dance lesson. Today, Patricia hasn't forgotten where she came from. She and her husband Jean-Pierre are in charge of the critically acclaimed Charlotte Ballet, which offers a program that gives dance scholarships to young people in need. So, for sharing her spirit and her smile in so many ways, tonight we honor Patricia McBride.

In "Nine to Five," Lily Tomlin plays an undervalued employee whose chauvinist boss steals her ideas and screams at her to get coffee. [*Laughter*] Finally, she and two coworkers get so fed up, they kidnap him. They get to work changing the office. Working moms get treated better. Productivity rises. The top brass are thrilled. It's basically a live-action version of the working family policies I've been promoting for years. [*Laughter*] It's the—we've sent DVDs to all the Members of Congress to try to get them on the program. [*Laughter*]

That role has Lily written all over it. It's edgy, a little dark, but fundamentally optimistic. She's created countless characters, from Ernestine, the telephone operator, to Lucille the Rubber Freak, to Edith Ann, the 5½-year-old philosopher—all of them kind of oddballs, like Lily—[*laughter*]—all portrayed with incredible warmth and affection, like Lily. She pushed boundaries as well. On her 1973 variety show, "Lily," she and Richard Pryor performed a skit called "Juke and Opal," about two Black folks hanging out in a diner. [*Laughter*] One reviewer called it "the most profound meditation on race and class that I have ever seen on a major network," which says something both about Lily and the major networks. [*Laughter*] That was ad-libbed, by the way.

[*At this point, actor Lily Tomlin whispered something to the President.*]

The President. [*Laughter*] In her one-woman show, "The Search of Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe," written by her brilliant partner, Jane Wagner—[*applause*]—yay, Jane—Lily played a dozen characters, transforming instantly into men and women, young, old, crazy, and sane.

And this versatility has led to a flood of awards: Emmys, Tonys, a Grammy, Oscar nomination. She's just inches away from an EGOT. [*Laughter*] And now she's a Kennedy Center honoree. When asked what she hoped her tribute tonight would look like, she said, "What I'd like to see is a big stream of gay drag artists come out as Ernestine." [*Laughter*] I haven't talked to George Stevens. I don't know whether this has been arranged. [*Laughter*] Although, I'd like to see it too. I think that would be fun. [*Laughter*] But I can promise that your contributions to American stage and screen will live on. For her genius, her compassion, for just being funny, we honor tonight Lily Tomlin.

About 40 years ago, a young singer-songwriter named Gordon Sumner was known to wear a yellow-and-black, striped sweater. Ever since, he's been known by one name: Sting. Now, not everybody can pull off a name like Sting, but this guy can. His wife Trudie calls him Sting. Apparently, his kids call him Sting. [*Laughter*] "POTUS" is a pretty good nickname—[*laughter*]—but let's face it, it's not as cool as "Sting." [*Laughter*] I kind of wish I was called "Sting." I'm stuck with "POTUS." The—[*laughter*].

But everybody knows that Sting is more than just a name. He is an all-around creative force. There's his singular voice on classics from the Police: "Roxanne," "Every Breath You Take," "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic." There's his incredible solo career, the songwriting that shape-shifts between rock and jazz and reggae and rhythms drawn from all around the world. He's acted in films. He's topped the classical charts. He just opened a musical on Broadway. The guy once turned down a chance to be a Bond villain. Who does that? [*Laughter*] Sting, apparently. I mean, look at him. He's too cool, right? [*Laughter*]

Because just being a celebrity was never Sting's goal. This is a man who comes from humble roots. He's the son of a milkman and a hairdresser. When he was a child, he was so tall that his classmates called him Lurch. They've regret that now. [*Laughter*] That's payback right there. He's here. You, whoever you are, you're out there. So—[*laughter*]. Before he had any success as a singer, he had worked as a teacher, a construction worker, and in a tax office. And if a few things had gone differently, we could be living in a world with a really hip, cool tax clerk named Lurch. [*Laughter*] Instead, we've got Sting: artist, truth teller, a champion of human rights, a champion of our environment. And for all those reasons, and the fact that his music is spectacular and beau-

tiful—for all those reasons, tonight we honor Sting.

One of four kids in his family in Concord, California, Tom Hanks once said his idea of a good time growing up was to take a bus to Sacramento. [*Laughter*] In the years since, Tom has flown a rocket to outer space, he's fallen in love with a mermaid, he's faced down Somali pirates, mooned the President of the United States. [*Laughter*] I'm glad he got that last one out of his system before this evening. [*Laughter*]

Tom's career began just like so many Hollywood legends: dressing in drag for a show called "Bosom Buddies"—[*laughter*]—kung-fu fighting the Fonz on "Happy Days." But he first won our hearts in comedy, with big hits like "Big" and "Splash." I did watch "Big" last night. It's—that's a great movie. I love that movie. [*Laughter*] Got kind of choked up at the end when—[*laughter*]. And as the years passed, he told us "there's no crying in baseball," "life is like a box of chocolates." He told "Houston, we have a problem." And as a cartoon cowboy, he showed us we can always keep our faith in a little boy.

But Tom isn't known simply for his characters, he's known for his character. For his tremendous support of our veterans, he's in the Army Ranger Hall of Fame. For his support of the space program, he has an asteroid named after him. Through Tom, we've seen our World War II heroes not simply in sepia tones somewhere in the distance, but as they truly were: gritty, emotional, flawed, human. Through Tom, we saw the courageous faces behind an AIDS epidemic often overshadowed by stigma and bigotry. Through Tom, again and again, we've seen our passion and our resolve and our love for each other. As his friend Steven Spielberg once said, "If Norman Rockwell were alive today, he would paint a portrait of Tom."

And people have said that Tom is Hollywood's everyman, that he's this generation's Jimmy Stewart or Gary Cooper. But he's just Tom Hanks. And that's enough. That's more than enough. And for that, we honor him tonight—Mr. Tom Hanks.

So, Reverend Al Green, Patricia McBride, Lily Tomlin, Sting, Tom Hanks—charm, soul, spirit, spunk—they've helped us better understand ourselves and each other. And, as President Kennedy expressed, they've helped us center our purpose as a nation, and together reflect the quality of our society. For that, we cannot thank them enough. We are so glad to be able to celebrate these extraordinary people. Thank you for everything that you've given to us over the years and for what you're going to give us in the future.

Congratulations. God bless you all. Please join me in saluting one last time our extraordinary Kennedy Center Honorees for this evening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:09 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Stevens, son of President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities Cochairman George C. Stevens, Jr.; Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, president and artistic director, Charlotte Ballet; Hilton Als, staff writer, the New Yorker magazine; Jane Wagner, wife of actor Lily Tomlin; Trudie Styler, wife, and Joe, Fuschia, Brigette M., Jake, Eliot P., and Giacomo L. Sumner, children, of musician Gordon "Sting" Sumner; Jim, Larry, and Sandra Hanks, siblings of actor Thomas J. Hanks; and film director Steven A. Spielberg.

Remarks to Members of the Senior Executive Service
December 9, 2014

Thank you very much. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. Thank you very much. Thank you. Well, thank you for that introduction, Elliott, and your service. Thanks to all of my members of the Cabinet who are here today. And welcome, everybody who is here as well as joining us online.

My message here is simple: Thank you. I'd like to come bearing raises and perks and—[*laughter*]. But I can't. [*Laughter*] But what I

can do is tell you how important you are not just to me, but to the country.

Many of you do what you do at extraordinary sacrifice. You could work at a lot of places. You made a decision at some point in your life to serve your country. Your country is stronger because you made that decision. You keep America running—our airports, our Embassies, our financial system. You take care of our troops and their families. You do it without fanfare. In fact, doing your job right often means nobody hears about you. [*Laughter*] They only report when something goes wrong or when there's a shutdown and suddenly somebody notices, "Oh, we need that, and nobody is doing it." [*Laughter*]

And in recent years, it's gotten more challenging for so many of you. You work under tough circumstances, whether it's sequestration, pay freeze, shutdown, and more importantly, a political climate where folks too often talk down government for cheap applause.

So my main message is, thank you. But part of my message today also is to recognize that we do have an issue that we've got to address, and that is, Americans don't trust government like we used to. Part of that is a very deliberate strategy of trying to undermine government. Part of it is political opportunism. But part of it is our need to constantly adapt to the demands of a 21st century.

That's why we need you, and that's why we need the best and brightest of coming generations to serve. And that's why those of us who believe that government can and must be a force for good; those of us that believe that together, we can keep our country safe and guarantee basic security and make sure everybody has a shot at success; those of us who believe, as President Lincoln did, that there are some things we should and must do on our own, but there are some things that we can and should do better together; those of us who believe in both individual initiative, but also the common good—we've got to work harder to make sure that government works.

We have to constantly ask ourselves, how can we serve Americans better? How can we yank this Government into the 21st century and make it smarter and faster and more responsive? Because if all we're doing is hunkering down and trying to push back against complaints and criticisms—many of which are unfair—but we're not engaging in self-reflection and trying to figure out how every single day we can be doing our jobs a little bit better, then we're failing the American people, and we're failing an incredible tradition that helped to build this country that you are a part of.

So I've got a couple suggestions in this process; I want to know yours. But first, I want to just offer a few examples of people who ask themselves that question: How can I do it better every single day and, as a consequence, make this country stronger?

Case study number one: When the Ebola outbreak began, Gary Penner and the State Department's Medical Services team helped swiftly transport American aid workers with Ebola to the United States for lifesaving treatment. And then Gary traveled to our Embassies in Liberia and Sierra Leone and Guinea to brief all our personnel in the region on the steps they should take to stay safe. And at a time of stress and fear, Gary and his team helped keep people calm and prepared and healthy. And so Gary's been an integral part of a team that, as we speak, is in West Africa saving lives. And for that, we want to thank Gary.

Example number two: We worked with the international community to destroy Syria's declared chemical weapons, which have made the region and the world safer. And it was Kevin Tokarski's job to help get those stockpiles out of Syria and onto a ship so they could be taken away and destroyed. You probably never heard of Kevin's team at the Transportation Department. That's what happens when you do your job well. [*Laughter*] Fortunately for the world, they did their job well, and we thank you, Kevin, for not making news and getting those chemical weapons out.

Example number three: Although everybody here is doing remarkable work, let's face it, usually, what we do isn't rocket science—unless it is. [*Laughter*] So Julie Kramer White is helping America launch a new era of space exploration. Julie is NASA's Chief Engineer for

Orion, the new spacecraft that could carry humans farther into space than we've ever seen before. I'm sure you were all as proud as I was to see *Orion*'s first successful flight test last Friday. America was already the first nation to land a rover on Mars; when an American is the first human to set foot there, we'll have Julie and her team to thank. And at that point, I'll be out of the Presidency, and I might hitch a ride. [*Laughter*] So thank you, Julie, for your great work.

I could go on indefinitely. Our senior leaders here and around the globe are the best of the best. I have to tell you, by the way, increasingly, we're attracting folks from the private sector to come and work with us and help brainstorm with us around issues, and it always amuses me when they have been around here for a while and they report back to me, "Wow, these people are really smart; they really work hard." [*Laughter*] "Yes, it shouldn't surprise you." But it's a testament to the fact that, too often, you don't get that notice. And with your help, we're working to give you a little more support to keep attracting the new talent that we're going to need for the future.

So, first, we're creating a new initiative called the White House Leadership Development Program for Future Senior Career Executives. Talented civil servants are going to have a chance to rotate through different agencies on high-priority assignments, and then they'll bring back their new expertise to their home agency. We want great ideas to have the chance to spread. We want people to get new experiences that reenergize them, reinvigorate them. We want those ideas to cross-pollinate across agencies. We want the next generation of leaders to have the experience of solving problems and building relationships across the Government. Because one thing that we have to acknowledge is that our Government often statutorily was organized for the needs of the 1930s or forties or sixties, and too often, we get stovepiped at a time when we need people with different skillsets and different agencies to be working together. So this is a terrific opportunity for folks to create networks across Government.

Second, we want to do more to recruit, develop, and retain exceptional civil servants, and nobody knows how to do that better than you. So we're creating a White House Advisory Group on Senior Executive Service Reform, and it's going to include leaders from large and small agencies as well as rising leaders. We want to hear from them too. And we also want to make sure you're hearing from your employees. Every year, they give feedback through the Federal employee survey, but too few of you see it. So, starting today, all of you are going to have access to a website where we've assembled that feedback in a way that's clear and easy to read. It's called unlocktalent.gov. It's worth checking out.

One of the things that we know in the private sector about continuous improvement is, you've got to have the folks right there on the front lines able to make suggestions and know that they're heard and to not simply be rewarded for doing an outstanding job, but to see their ideas implemented in ways that really make a difference. Because most of the time, people get involved in government because they want to make a difference. And there's no greater satisfaction than when you see something that you identified as a better way of doing things implemented.

Third, in recognition of those who go above and beyond every day, we're creating an award to recognize outstanding service. I'm surprised this hasn't been done before, but we're going to start. When an American needs something from their Government, whether an education grant or a passport or help turning a great idea into a small business, they're interacting with many of you. You can make enormous differences in the lives of individual Americans every single day.

We are going to honor the people who do this job best. Because ultimately, that's what it's about, making sure our Government serves the American people. And I'm going to keep doing everything I can to support you and your teams. I want you to know that I've got your back, because I know that for many of you, this job is more than just a paycheck, it's a chance to serve the country that you love. That's why

some of the best civil servants never quite leave the job. Even after they retire, or could retire, they keep on serving.

Which brings me to two public servants that many of you know. When Elton Lester began his career at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department was still pretty new. He was the only person of color in the General Counsel's office. And today, thanks in part to Elton's efforts, HUD's workforce has grown more diverse. And now Elton helps oversee every one of HUD's insured housing and assisted housing programs even though, after more than 40 years in public service, he could retire. He could be getting a check every month and not working. And that's dedication: that he's still showing up, because he knows his stuff and he wants to make a difference.

Dwight Ink was a member of the civil service under seven Presidents, briefed President Eisenhower, led the recovery effort after the 1964 Alaskan earthquake. I confess I didn't know there was an earthquake in Alaska in 1964. [*Laughter*] I was 3 at the time. [*Laughter*]

When he was 70, he retired—kind of. He stayed active on the issue he's most passionate about, and that's strengthening the civil service; helped lead public administration organizations; wrote articles about how to make Government better. Today, Dwight is 92. He's still at it. He and his wife Dona are here with us here today. I'd ask all of you to join me in giving Dwight and all the retired civil servants here a big round of applause. [*Applause*] There's Dwight back there.

So there's—that's the kind of spirit of service that built America. That's the commitment that keeps America strong. And now it's up to us to build upon the work that generations of public servants have done to make our Nation stronger and more prosperous. And every day, I am proud to be your partner.

This is going to continue to be a tough environment. There's not going to be a lot of new money flowing. There is going to continue to be ideological battles about—for those who think that the market is king and there's no room for any kind of regulatory efforts to make our air and water cleaner or to make our workers be in a safer work environment, to assure that every child, not just some, get opportunity. It's going to continue to be easy copy for the press to focus on the 1 thing that goes wrong instead of the 99 things that go right. That's not going to change.

But what I tell my team in the White House every single day and I want to tell all of you, and some of you know this, and some of you have lived it—Dwight certainly has: There is no greater opportunity to help more people, to make a bigger difference—in some cases to help millions, in some cases to help billions around the world—than to be in the positions that we are privileged to be in right now.

And for the short time that we're on this Earth, I always tell my daughters there are two things you need to learn. One is you need to learn how to love and make connections with people, to show empathy and be able to stand in somebody else's shoes and understand what it is to be a friend or a spouse or a parent. And the other thing is being useful, just being of use: knowing that when you wake up every day, you have the chance to maybe make sure that somebody who didn't have a job last week has a job; to make sure that somebody who is driving to work gets there safely because the road is safe; to make sure that somebody who didn't have health care now has it and, as a consequence, are able to catch that disease before it kills them; to make sure that some child somewhere that doesn't have much of a chance suddenly gets that chance, and their whole world, their whole life suddenly unfolds differently because of what you did.

What an incredible privilege that is. What better way to spend your careers than what you do right now. I want you to wake up every day knowing that the President of the United States appreciates you for making that difference.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. at the Washington Hilton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Acquisition and Procurement Elliott B.

Branch; Gary D. Penner, Medical Director of the Office of Medical Services, Department of State; Kevin M. Tokarski, Associate Administrator for Strategic Sealift, Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration; Elton J. Lester, Deputy General Counsel for Housing Programs, Department of Housing and Urban Development; and Dwight A. Ink, president emeritus, National Academy of Public Administration, and former president, Institute of Public Administration.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Town Hall Meeting at Casa Azafrán in Nashville, Tennessee
December 9, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you very much. Everybody, please have a seat, have a seat.

Well, hello, Nashville.

Audience member. Hola. [*Laughter*]

The President. Hola. Cómo estás?

Audience member. Bien, bien.

The President. Bien. Thank you, Renata, for the wonderful introduction. I've brought some friends with me who I think you may know: your Congressmen, Jim Cooper; as well as Congressman Steve Cohen from Memphis is here. And I want to thank—is your mayor still here? Where did he go? There he is right there, doing a great job. The—and his wonderful daughter, we've got to brag about her, she's a junior at Barnard. We decided just to embarrass her. When you're the father of daughters, your job is to embarrass them, and I'm trying to give an assist here. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Casa Azafrán for hosting us and for being home to so many organizations that do important work welcoming immigrants to the community. And that's why I've come here today. I won't make a long speech, because I want to have a dialogue, but I wanted to give some remarks at the top.

As Renata mentioned, some people might think Nashville was an odd place to talk immigration. It's not what comes to mind when people think about gateways to America. But as all of you know, Nashville's got one of the fastest growing immigrant populations in the country. "New Nashvillians"—they're from Somalia, Nepal, Laos, Mexico, Bangladesh. And Nashville happens to be the home of the largest Kurdish community in the United States as well.

"They" are "us." They work as teachers in our schools, doctors in our hospitals, police officers in our neighborhoods. They start small businesses at a faster rate than many native-born Americans. They create jobs making this city more prosperous and a more innovative place. And of course, they make the food better. [*Laughter*] I know that Tennessee barbeque is pretty popular, but Korean barbeque is pretty good too. [*Laughter*]

And the point is, welcoming immigrants into your community benefits all of us. And I was talking to your mayor, Karl Dean, on the way over here, and he understands this. He's been a great partner when it comes to preparing immigrants to become citizens.

A couple of weeks ago, I created a Task Force on New Americans that's going to help do this kind of work all across the country. But, as we all know, our immigration system has been broken for a long time. Families who come here the right way can get stuck in line for years. Business owners who treat their workers right sometimes are undercut by competition from folks who are not just hiring undocumented workers, but then underpaying them or not paying them minimum wage or not giving them the benefits that they have earned. Nobody likes the idea of somebody reaping the rewards of living in America without its responsibilities as well. And there are all kinds of folks who want to gladly embrace those responsibilities, but they have no way to come out of the shadows and get right with the law.

And a year and a half ago, a big majority of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents in the Senate, including both of your Senators, passed a bipartisan bill to fix our broken immigration system. And the bill wasn't perfect, but it was a commonsense compromise. It would have doubled the number of Border Patrol agents. It would have made the legal immigration system smarter and faster. It would have given millions of people the chance to earn their citizenship the right way. It was good for our economy. Independent economists estimated that it would not only grow our economy faster, but shrink our deficits faster. And if the House of Representatives had simply called for an up-or-down vote, it would have passed. It would be the law. We'd be on the way to solve—solving this problem in a sensible way. But, for a year and a half now, Republican leaders in the House blocked this simple up-or-down vote.

Now, I still believe that the best way to solve this is by working together to pass the kind of commonsense law that was passed in the Senate. But until then, there are actions that I have the legal authority to take that will help make our immigration system smarter and fairer. And I took those actions last month.

We're providing more resources at the border to help law enforcement personnel stop illegal crossings and send home those who cross over. We're going to focus our enforcement resources on people who actually pose a threat to our communities: felons rather than families and criminals rather than children. We're going to bring more undocumented immigrants out of the shadows so they can play by the rules. They have to pass a criminal background check, pay taxes, contribute more fully to our economy.

So this isn't amnesty or legalization or even a path to citizenship. It—that can only be done by Congress. It doesn't apply to anybody who's come to this country recently or who might come illegally in the future. What it does is create a system of accountability, a commonsense, middle-ground approach. And what we're saying is, until Congress fixes this problem legislatively, if you have deep ties to this country and you are willing to get right by the law and do what you need to do, then you shouldn't have to worry about being deported or being separated from your kids.

Now, these are the kind of lawful actions taken by every President, Republican and Democrat, for the past 50 years. So when Members of Congress question whether I have the authority to do this, I have one answer: Yes, and pass a bill. [*Laughter*] If you want Congress to be involved in this process, I welcome it, but you've got to pass a bill that addresses the various components of immigration reform in a commonsense way.

And I want to work with both parties to get this done. The day I sign this bill into law, then the executive actions I take are no longer necessary and some of the changes that I've instituted administratively become permanent.

Unfortunately, so far, the only response that we've had out of the House was a vote taken last week to force talented young people and workers to leave our country. Rather than deport students or separate families or make it harder for law enforcement to do its job, we just need Congress to work with us to pass a commonsense law to fix the broken immigration system.

And meanwhile, Washington shouldn't let disagreements on this issue prevent action on every other issue. That's not how our democracy works. Americans are tired of gridlock. We're seeing the economy move forward. We need to build on that. And certainly, my administration is ready to work forward on a whole range of issues.

I do recognize that there are controversies around immigration; there always have been, by the way. Even those who know we need to reform the system may be concerned about not having Congress get it done. And then, there are some folks who worry about immigration changing the fabric of our society or taking jobs from native-born Americans. And I understand those concerns, but as I said, they're not new. As a country, we have had these concerns since the Irish and Italians and Poles were coming to Boston and New York and had the same con-

cerns when Chinese and Japanese Americans were traveling out West.

But what our history and the facts show is that generation after generation, immigrants have been a net-plus to our economy, and a net-plus to our society. And that's what cities like Nashville prove is still the case. And this city proves that we can address these concerns together and make sure that immigration works for everybody: that it strengthens our economy, that it strengthens our communities, that we can talk about some of the tensions and concerns in a constructive way rather than yelling at each other.

And so let me close with a story of somebody who's working to bring people together. David Lubell, who many of you know and who's here today—where's David? Where is he? There is he. So David used to run the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition. And he knew that some folks were skeptical about immigrants changing the face of Nashville. And he also knew, though, that these immigrants were good people. So he saw an opportunity for immigration to unite the city rather than divide it. And in 2005, he started "Welcoming Tennessee," which connects long-term residents in the community with new immigrants. And you'd have dinners and church socials, and at Rotary clubs, and folks got to know each other and maybe feel some empathy and see themselves in new arrivals.

And the conversations weren't always easy, but it created a foundation of mutual understanding and respect. And today, David's initiative is expanding across the country. I think we—you said, David, that we've got these kinds of efforts going on in 42 cities around the country.

This is what makes America exceptional. We welcome strivers. We welcome dreamers from all around the world. And it keeps us young, and it keeps us invigorated, and it keeps us striving and pushing the boundaries of what's possible. And then, we all bind ourselves together around similar ideals, a similar creed. And one generation in, suddenly those kids are already Americans like everybody else, and we have the same dreams and hopes for them, the same aspirations.

And if we keep harnessing that potential, there's no limit to what this country can achieve. So Nashville is helping to lead the way in getting this conversation right. We hope that if it happens around the country, that eventually it will drift into the House of Representatives—[*laughter*]—and we're going to get the kind of comprehensive legislation that we need to actually solve this problem.

So with that, let me start taking some questions. Thank you very much, everybody. I appreciate it.

So I've got a microphone here. This is a nice, intimate group. And so there's no rules, really. I'd just ask everybody who wants to speak to raise their hand. I'll call on you one at a time. We've got some microphones in the audience. And why don't you, when you're asking your questions, stand, introduce yourself, tell us a little about yourself, and then ask your question. Try to keep your question relatively brief so, and I'll try to keep my answers relatively brief. [*Laughter*] I don't always succeed, but I'll do my best. I'm going to take off my jacket because it's warm in here. Is Marvin back there? Okay, we've got some—here we go. Thanks.

All right. Who wants to go first? Yes, right here in the front.

Implementation of the President's Immigration Policies/Continuation of the President's Immigration Policies Under Future Administrations/Need for Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation

Q. Hi, Mr. President. Thank you so much for coming to Nashville, and the Latin community love you and welcome you to Nashville.

The President. Thank you.

Q. My question is—and I think this is a concern in the community that—what is going to happen if the next administration decide not to follow what you——

The President. Right.

Q. ——the executive action? And I think many of the communities is afraid, are they going to be first in line to deportation because

they give their information? And that would be my question.

The President. Well, I think it's a good question. So let me just—let me go over the mechanics of what's going to happen.

First of all, part of what we're saying is that we can't deport 11 million people, and it would be foolish to try, as well as, I think, wrong for us to try. Congress only allocates a certain amount of money to the immigration system, so we have to prioritize. And my priority is not to separate families who have already been living here, but to try to make sure that our borders are secure, to make sure that people come through the right way, to focus on criminals, focus—those who pose a real risk to our society.

And so what's happened is, is the Department of Homeland Security, which is in charge of the Immigration Services, what it said is, is that we're going to set up priorities in terms of who is subject to deportation. And at the top are criminals, people who've—pose a threat, and at the bottom are ordinary people who are otherwise law abiding. And what we're saying essentially is, in that low-priority list, you won't be a priority for deportation. You're not going to be deported. We're not going to keep on separating families. And that new priority list is—applies to everybody, all 11 million people who are here—I mean, not 11 million; let's say, whatever the number is. So, even if somebody didn't sign up, they're still much less likely to be subject to deportation. That's because we've changed our enforcement priorities in a formal way.

What we're also saying, though, is that for those who have American children or children who are legal permanent residents, that you can actually register and submit yourself to a criminal background check, pay any back taxes and commit to paying future taxes, and if you do that, you'll actually get a piece of paper that gives you an assurance that you can work and live here without fear of deportation. That doesn't apply to everybody, but it does apply to roughly 5 million, about half of what is estimated to be the number of undocumented workers here.

Now, that is temporary. Just like DACA, the program that we put in place for young people who are brought here who otherwise are good citizens, are studying, working, joining our military—we did that several years ago, where we said, it doesn't make sense for us to subject these young people to a deportation risk; they're Americans by—in their heart even if they don't have the right piece of paper. That's temporary as well, although it's been subject to renewal.

And so it's true that a future administration might try to reverse some of our policies. But I'll be honest with you: I think that the American people basically have a good heart and want to treat people fairly. And every survey shows that if in fact somebody has come out, subjected themselves to a background check, registered, paid their taxes, that the American people support allowing them to stay. So I think any future administration that tried to punish people for doing the right thing, I think, would not have the support of the American people.

The real question is, how do we make sure that enough people register so that it's not just a few people in a few pockets around the country? And that's going to require a lot of work by local agencies, by municipalities, by churches, by community organizations. We've got to give people confidence that they can go ahead and register; also make sure that they understand they don't have to hire a lawyer or go to the notary in order to pay for this. Because what we saw during DACA when the young people were given this opportunity, a lot of people signed up, but sometimes, you would see advertisements, "Come and give us $1,000 or $2,000 and we'll help you"—you don't have to do that. And so we've just got to build an effective network around the country. And the Department of Homeland Security will be working with local organizations to make sure that people get the right information.

But I think the main response to people that we have to assure them of is that the American people actually are fairminded and want to reward rather than punish people who do the right thing. And if you register, I'm confident

that that's going to be something that allows you to then get on a path to being here in this country with your children and watching them grow up and making a life for yourself, as you already have.

Last point: It still is important for us, though, because this is temporary, to make sure that we keep pushing for comprehensive immigration reform. Without an actual law, an actual statute passed by Congress, it's true that theoretically a future administration could do something that I think would be very damaging. It's not likely, politically, that they reverse everything that we've done, but it could be that some people then end up being in a disadvantageous position. And nobody is going to have a path to actual citizenship until we get a law passed.

Now, the Senate law would call for people to go to the back of the line, so it would take 10, 13 years before they had citizenship, but at least, there was that pathway. That's why we still need a law.

And then there are some areas like, for example, the business sector, a lot of high-tech businesses are still looking for young graduates from computer science programs or physics programs around the country. And instead of being able to recruit them and put them to work, those kids are all going home and starting new businesses and creating jobs someplace else. And that doesn't make any sense. So that's another area where we couldn't do anything administratively about that. We were able to streamline some of the legal immigration system, but we've still got more work to do.

Okay? Good. All right. I'm going to go boy, girl, boy, girl to make sure that it's fair. [*Laughter*] So, right here. Let's get you a mike.

Implementation of the President's Immigration Policies

Q. Thank you. Good afternoon, President. Thank you so much for doing what you did. I'm Salvador Cervantes. I was undocumented for 10 years. In 1996, I took advantage of the amnesty. I want to thank you. I'm a community organizer with the Center for Community Change in Washington, DC, working with the Tennessee immigrants from the Human Rights Coalition. And I really thank the people from Nashville, Tennessee, for hosting two Chicagoans. Of course, I'm from Chicago too. [*Laughter*]

And my question to you is, thank you for the 5 million, but what about the others? There are millions of people who are going to be in the limbo, at risk of being deported. And the second question is, since talking about confidence, people are skeptical about this, because they are afraid to apply for this. So what is your administration going to do to get the confidence and people to feel safe to apply for this program that you just passed? Thank you.

The President. Okay. Well, I sort of answered the question, but I'll try to answer it one more time. The prioritization in terms of deportation, that applies to everybody, even if you don't do anything. Now, this will take time to get ICE officers at the ground level to understand what these new priorities are and to apply them in a consistent way. And so there are still going to be stories around the country where some family is separated.

Over time, though, we're really going to be pushing to retrain and refocus and reprioritize ICE officers to understand, let's focus on criminals, let's focus on felons, let's not focus on families.

In terms of setting up the system to sign people up to register so they can get an actual piece of paper that says they can work here, that's probably going to take a couple of months. And so that gives us time then to communicate through our community organizations, through our churches, through our cities and towns to make sure that people have good information.

But—so the folks who, as you said, are in limbo, it's true that they're not going to qualify for the DACA-like registration process that I described. They'll still be, if they're law abiding otherwise, if they're working, peaceful, then they're much less likely to deportation now than they would have been in the past. And they don't have to do anything for that. But the registration process, if you qualify, is powerful because you're now able to go to work without

being in the shadows, and you're paying taxes, which is good for everybody, because we want people to be above board and to do things the right way.

And I think that those who register, here's—my belief is, is that when we do get to passing a law, finally, I think those who have taken the time to register, paid taxes, gone through a criminal background check, they've got documentation and proof that they've done all that, they're going to have an easier time then qualifying, I think, for a more permanent legal status because they will have already gone through this screening. And that's one incentive for why people should want to sign up.

But building trust will take time. But that's where you come in, so that's your job. I'm going to work with you. I'll work with Renata, and I'll work with other activists here to make sure it happens. But we're going to have to do this together.

I will point out that you already had incredible courage among young people when we announced DACA. Now, we didn't get a hundred percent of young people who qualified signing up, but we got more than half of the people who were qualified signing up. And slowly then, each person who has the courage to sign up, that creates more confidence across the board. Okay.

All right, it's a young woman's turn now. Yes, go ahead.

Pursuing Citizenship Under Current Law

Q. Hi, Mr. President, and thank you so much for being here with us and giving us this opportunity to speak out our fears. And I would like to ask you—me. My name is Martha Lugo, and I'm with the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition. I'm part of the Migrants Women Committee. And I would like to ask you: People like me that will be—probably benefit from this Executive order, there is a lot of fear still for people that can have the path to a citizen, but not immediately, but if they apply for DAPA, the Deferred Action for Parents, will they face, like, a bar from being in this situation?

The President. No, I think that those who are—look, I would encourage anybody who has another path for legalization to follow that path. But this does not short-circuit whatever other strategies that you're pursuing. If you are already trying to get legal permanent resident status or citizenship through some of the existing laws, then you should feel free to continue that. What this does do is it simply says that it gives you an opportunity to make sure that deportation is not going to happen during this period, which will extend for several years. Okay?

Can Big Marvin get me my cup of tea back there?

[*At this point, White House Advance Associate Jesse Sendroff handed the President a cup of tea.*]

Oh, here it is. All right. This isn't Big Marvin, but he's big. But he's not—[*laughter*].

All right. Gentleman there in the back. You've got a mike right behind you.

Need for Civility in Immigration Debate

Q. I'm a member of the Coalition for Education—Immigration. I'm an immigrant to Nashville. I grew up—Chicago, have lived here the last 12 years.

The President. It's warmer here. [*Laughter*]

Q. I do miss the White Sox.

The President. Yes.

Q. My question is about—one of the many things I appreciate so much about your leadership is the civil way in which you approach the most difficult of problems, in spite of hearing the rancor you do from those who disagree. [*Inaudible*]—in a community like this, trying to talk with reason only to be greeted by deep emotion and anger and rhetoric that's demeaning. It's almost as if we need a civility platform for our Nation, an office of civility—maybe for our U.S. Congress. Excuse me, Jim. But I'm serious about, how do we teach young people to act in a civil way if we don't role-model that civility? And how important is that for us to move forward, that we can engage in the kinds of conversations that—in the tone that you present problems?

The President. Well, look, first of all, I don't know anybody more civil than Jim Cooper. The—he is an extraordinary gentleman and always has been, ever since I've had a chance to know him since I came to Washington.

Look, immigration, as I said before, has always elicited passion. Right? And it's ironic because unless you are a member of a Native American tribe, you came here from someplace else—[*laughter*]—or your people did. And I know that sometimes folks talk about, well, we came here the right way rather than the wrong way. And it's true that previous generations came through Ellis Island or they came through Angel Island or other ways of arriving here.

But I think sometimes we overstate the degree to which that was some really elaborate bureaucratic process. There's a reason, for example, that these days a lot of people named Smith used to be named Smithsowsky or Smitharea or whatever it is. What happened is, when they came in somebody just said, "What's your name?" And they stamped them, and they couldn't—if they couldn't pronounce it—you always hear stories about—they Anglicized it. A lot of times people's papers were not necessarily being checked because folks might not have had papers. And who came in and who didn't varied depending on how big of a workforce—or how much industry was looking for new labor and what the political climate was at that particular time.

And so what happens is, is that once folks are here, we kind of forget that we used to be there. And what I try to do when I talk about these issues is just try to put yourself in somebody else's shoes and feel some empathy and recognize that to some degree, if you're an American, somewhere back there, there was somebody who was a newcomer here too. And it wasn't always neat and orderly the way the American population expanded across the West. And if we have that sense of empathy, then maybe that creates civility. That's why the kinds of efforts that we're seeing here in Nashville—just conversations where people get to know newcomers—is so important.

It's interesting, I get—I was telling Steve and Jim—I get about 40,000 correspondence every day. And some of them are just writing to say, "You're doing a great job, keep going." Some of them are, "You are the worst President ever, you're an idiot." A lot of them are just people asking for help.

But more than once—I mean, it's multiple times during the course of my Presidency—I've gotten letters from people who say: "I don't agree with you about anything, I am a Republican. I used to be really angry at you about your immigration posture, and then I found out that my son Jim's best friend Jose was undocumented, and he wasn't going to be able to apply to the local college because he was afraid about being deported. And this is a kid who has played in my back yard and helped me wash my car and been on the ball team with my kid. And I loved this kid, and so I don't think it's right that this young person shouldn't be treated the same way that I'd want someone to treat my son." And I've gotten a lot of letters like that. And they say, "And so, even though I still don't agree with you about anything"—[*laughter*]—"I do ask you that you give Jose a chance."

And so that's where civility comes from. It's that interaction and personal experience, as opposed to just being able to stereotype somebody one way or the other. Now, it's important, by the way, though, that the civility runs both ways. And I do think—obviously, I've been at the receiving end of people really angry at me about not just these executive actions, but have been ginned up by some of the conservative talk shows that think that I'm usurping my authority, despite the fact that every previous President has exercised the same authority, or they think I'm favoring immigrants over red-blooded Americans. And so that's a lot of the criticism directed at me.

But what's also true is, sometimes, advocates on behalf of immigrants have suggested that anybody who is concerned about the impact of immigration or asks questions about comprehensive immigration reform, that they must be racist or they must be anti-immigrant or they're ignorant. And that's not true either.

I mean, there are people who are good people who actually believe in immigration, but are concerned about rewarding somebody who broke American laws. There are good people who believe in immigration, but are concerned, will new immigrants depress wages, particularly in the low-wage sectors of the economy? Those are legitimate questions, and we have to be just as civil in addressing those questions as we expect people to be when we are talking to them. Because I think the facts are on our side. I think the studies have shown that over time immigrants aren't lowering wages, but in fact improving the economy and, over time, boosting wages and jobs for everyone.

So I would rather just make the argument on the facts, but just because somebody thinks that instinctually doesn't mean that they are bad people. So civility is good, but it doesn't just run one way. And I think the Good Book says, don't throw stones in glass houses, or make sure we're looking at the log in our eye before we're pulling out the mote in other folks eyes. And I think that's as true in politics as it is in life.

Okay. Let's see if I've got any women who want to ask questions. See, I'm going to make sure I'm fair. [*Laughter*] That young lady in the back right there. Yes, you. [*Laughter*]

The President's Executive Actions on Immigration/Office of Legal Counsel Determination of President's Legal Authorities/Parents of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Policy Beneficiaries

Q. Hi. My name is Beatrice—[*inaudible*]—Gatebuke. And I work with FASHA, a nonprofit organization that works with refugees and immigrants. And one question I have: Was there a particular reason why the parents of the DACA—the DREAMers, the DACA recipients, were excluded in your new Executive order?

The President. Yes, there is. And it was, the actions I took were bound by the legal authority that the Office of Legal Counsel determined I had in this area. Now, the Office—I don't want to get too technical here, but the Office of Legal Counsel is a special office in the Department of Justice that is mandated to give me independent judgment not subject to politics or pressure from me about what my legal authorities are.

And so we presented to them the various things that we'd like to do. They were very clear about my legal authority to prioritize and then provide this temporary protection for parents whose children were Americans or—American citizens or legal permanent residents. Because the argument they found compelling and there was a lot of precedent for, was essentially a humanitarian argument, that if we're prioritizing, why would we want to separate families?

The challenge we had in the minds of the Office of Legal Counsel was, if you've already exempted the young people through DACA, and then you bootstrap off of that the capacity to exempt their parents as well, you're not rooted originally in somebody who is either a citizen or a legal permanent resident. So it was a legal constraint on our authority. It was not because we did not care about those parents.

And I know that there are a lot of "DREAM Act" kids who are concerned that their parents may not still qualify. A sizable number do because they have a sibling who ended up being born in the United States. But not all do. This is one more reason why we still need to pass comprehensive immigration reform. Because what we did was to do everything that I could within my legal authority, but not go beyond the legal authority that we possessed. Okay?

This young man right here. Here, I think the mike is coming from behind you.

Immigration Reform/Economic Benefits of Immigration

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Mohamed Shukri Hassan. We are delighted to have you here in Nashville and in Casa Azafrán. I'm a member of the mayor's New American Advisory Council and also direct a nonprofit that's housed here called AMAC, the American Muslim Advisory Council. And my question to you is that, in 2004, when you gave that speech about—at the Democratic Convention, kind of

alluded to this idea that we are one Nation. There's no black and blue—blue or red America. But when it comes to this issue of immigration, as someone that works in this community, our mantra here in Nashville is, "Nashville for all of us, and Tennessee for all of us."

So to come around that idea for America for all of us, that we don't keep having this conversation—as the President, you have been in this position the past 6 years—what would you say to other Americans who are feeling now on that side even considering the newly elected Congress that are adamant on stopping these steps? Because I've got the privilege of being the—welcoming Tennessee director, and being in those conversations, and inherently, Tennesseans are the nicest people. Those people are in charge of the—[*inaudible*]—that we used to have those conversations with. But what would you say to the rest of the Nations, who thinks that now new Americans or immigrants are getting this special treatment?

The President. Well, I addressed the Nation when I announced this action, and I made a couple of simple points.

First of all, America is a nation of immigrants, but it's also a nation of laws. And there does need to be accountability if you came here in a way that was not in accordance with the law. The question then becomes, how do you make that person accountable? I mean, one way of doing it is randomly or sporadically separating families, but you don't have uniform enforcement, you're pushing people into the shadows. They may not be paying taxes. They may be taken advantage of by unscrupulous employers. You are using all those resources instead of strengthening borders. And that's not a smart outcome.

The second approach would be to pass laws that say, let's improve the legal system. Because sometimes, people actually would be qualified to come here if the system was just a little smoother, but they end up with a situation where they've got to wait years to be reunited with a family member who's legally here, and the heartache just becomes too great. So we're—in some cases, we're pushing people into the illegal system because we're not making the legal system smart enough.

We can get people out of the shadows. We can acknowledge, they are our neighbors, our friends, our coworkers. And then, we still have to be serious about border security. And there have been times—I want to be very frank—there have been times where I've had arguments with immigrant rights activists who say, effectively, you know, there shouldn't be any rules, these are good people, why should we have any kind of enforcement like this. And my response is, in the eyes of God, everybody is equal. In the eyes of God, some child in Mexico, Guatemala, Libya, Nepal is the equal of my child.

I don't make any claims that my child is superior to somebody else's child. But I'm the President of the United States, and nation-states have borders. And frankly, because America is so much wealthier than most countries around the world, if we had no system of enforcing our borders and our laws, then I promise you, everybody would try to come here, or if not everybody—maybe you wouldn't have that many Swedes or Singaporians try to come here—but a whole lot of folks would try to come. And that we couldn't accommodate. And it wouldn't be fair, because there's—you have to have some sort of line. It can't just be—it can't be whoever is able to get in here first, and then, it's sort of first one to win the race. Because sometimes, it's just an accident that one person lives in a country that has a border with the United States, and another person in Somalia, it's a lot harder to get here.

So the idea is, then, that what we try to do is to have a system that resets; that acknowledges—and this is where I think most Americans are. They recognize, you know what, people who are already here—many times they've been here 5 years, 10 years, 20 years, they've got deep roots here, they've shown themselves to be good people, their kids are for all practical purposes Americans—let's just acknowledge they're part of our community, they're part of our society.

But then the tradeoff is, but let's try to make the legal system fairer. And in some cases, that

means, for example, doing more work at the borders. Although, by the way, the real work at the borders is not simply to just—more fencing and more people every 5 minutes at the borders, because we've already got a whole lot of folks at the borders. We can do some other additional stuff, but a lot of it is helping Mexico or helping Central American countries strengthen their economies so people don't feel desperate and compelled to come here.

But I guess the bottom line is, what I say to folks on the other side of this debate is, work with me to reflect the wisdom of the American people. And I think the American people's wisdom is, people who are already here, let's give them a shot, let's get them out of the shadows, but let's also set up a legal system that is more reliable, more certain, more fair, doesn't have people jumping the line, is more honest and reflecting the fact that families—it's very hard for them to stay separated for 10, 15 years, and so you shouldn't set up a legal system that requires that. You've got to figure out a way to have it more reflective of human nature.

Now, does that mean everybody is going to listen to me on the other side? Not necessarily. They're pretty sure I'm an illegal immigrant. [*Laughter*] That was a joke. [*Laughter*] But they—there are going to be some who just disagree with you.

The good news is, is that over time, these issues work themselves out. Anybody who is of Irish extraction—and that includes me, because I've been to a little town in Ireland called Moneygall, where my great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather came over here. It turns out, he was a bootmaker, and it turns out Biden's guy, Biden's great-great-great-great-great came from, I think, the adjoining county within, like, 20 years. So me and Biden are—really are cousins. [*Laughter*]

But anybody of Irish extraction just has to read your history and look at how people talked about Irish immigrants. I mean, it was just everything that's said today was said about them: They're criminals, they're shiftless, they are draining our resources, they're irresponsible, they're going to change our culture.

And so, if you read those passages, then you have to understand that this is not a new phenomenon. But the good news is, it should also be a source of optimism, because over time, essentially, new people get absorbed. And it's always messy. It's always a messy piece of business.

But the one thing that I want to emphasize—because sometimes, this doesn't get emphasized enough, and it seems somewhat abstract—but any economist will tell you that economies with younger workforces grow faster than economies with older workforces. One of the biggest advantages America has over Europe, over Japan, over China is we have a younger population. And it's almost a mathematical certainty that we will grow faster than they do, all things being equal. I mean, we've got to make good choices about investing in research and development and education and all that stuff, but all things being equal, we will grow significantly faster than those other countries because our population is younger.

The only reason our population is younger is because we have this tradition of immigrants. Otherwise—because native-born Americans, actually, our birth rates are as low as Europeans' are. But we replenish ourselves, and that's good. And by the way, people who are about my age right now and who are going to be looking to draw on Social Security, when you're 70, the way Social Security works, it's the current workforce that pays for the retired workforce. And so you have a stake in these folks working and paying taxes, these young people, to support your retirement. So this is—it's good for the economy as well as for our society.

How much time do I have? I want to make sure I'm not—am I doing pretty good? I've got a priest here who's got his hand up, but it's a woman's turn first so I—this is—I'm a little nervous about not calling on him right away, but I'm trying to stick to the rules here. [*Laughter*] So, all right, young lady right in the front here.

Political Engagement of Young People

Q. Thank you. Hello, Mr. President. My name is Elizabeth Narvaez-Vega. I am a senior

in high school. And my question to you would be, how can we as young people in our communities get involved to address issues such as immigration or the access to a postsecondary education? What are some things we can do?

The President. Well, if you're here, you must already be involved. Right? Because—[*laughter*]. You know, getting young people involved in civic life and activism and voting is one of the most important things we can do as a society. Because there are exceptions and there are people who are young at heart and young at mind, but the truth is, you get older, you get stuck in your ways, and you start looking backwards and really focused on what was instead of what could be.

And again, part of the reason America has done so well is because we constantly reimagine ourselves, and we have a youthful culture that says, well, let's—in the words of Robert Kennedy, some people ask why, and we have a tendency to ask why not. And that's good.

Now, young people are also busy with—I've got a couple of young people at home—they have other things that they're interested in. I won't name all of them. Hopefully, some if it is their books and doing their homework. [*Laughter*] And one of the most concerning things I had about the midterm elections was, young people—the voting rates among young people dropped off drastically.

Young people have tended to vote at very high levels during my Presidential campaigns, but in between, they lose interest. And part of what your peers have to do is to understand that politics and government and policy and all the decisions that are going to shape your lives are not just a matter of one election, but it has to be sustained over time.

And when you think about what's at stake right now, immigration is obviously a major issue. Climate change: I mean, most of those of us who are 50 or over, by the time the problems of a warming climate really hit, we'll be gone, but you'll still be around, and your kids will be here. And if it's having a significant impact on weather patterns and drought and wildfires and flooding and food and migration, it's not going to be pretty. So you have to get involved now to do something about it.

When we look at higher education costs, I mean, historically, Congress and State legislatures are more attentive to the demands of seniors than they are the demands of young people for one simple reason: Seniors vote, young people don't. If you want State legislatures to increase support for higher education that then can help reduce tuition, then young people have to vote at a higher percentage than just 12 percent of those who vote.

Look at what's happening right now with respect to concerns about bias and law enforcement and policing. I mean, I met with a group of young activists, including several from Ferguson, to talk to them, and I was very impressed with how they presented themselves, and they were very serious and thoughtful. And I told them, I said, listen, I want you to continue to be active, because that's how change happens. You need to be respectful. You need to understand that you're not going to get a hundred percent of the change that is needed, because that's never been how society works, but if you are steady and you sustain it and you push it and you don't get tired or disappointed when you get half a loaf instead of a whole loaf, over time, the country and the world is transformed.

And I'm confident that—I said in an interview recently—America is a more just place, and issues of racial discrimination are lessened today than they were 50 years ago or 20 years ago, but that didn't just happen by accident, that happened because people—especially young people—helped to make it happen. And over time, change occurs, and people adjust to a new reality, and they open their heart and mind to new possibilities. And young people are typically the triggers of that.

So I think when your leaders like—young leaders like you are talking to your friends, you've got to just remind them that you have responsibilities and obligations. And make sure that you serve pizza at the meetings—[*laughter*]—because free food always helps when getting young people involved in social causes. [*Laughter*]

All right, Father. Thank you for your patience there, sir. You've got a microphone behind you.

Biblical References to Immigration

Q. Father Joseph Breen, native Nashvillian. I think I speak on behalf of a good number of people, Mr. President, of both parties. Some, you know, may not agree with some of your policies, but I think I can speak for so many who are so proud of you for giving such a great example of a husband, of a father, and doing your very best as a President.

So we are very proud of you, grateful you've come to Nashville. We wish for you—I'm sure on behalf of all of us—a joyful and a blessed Christmas to you.

The President. Well, I appreciate that very much. That's very nice. [*Applause*] Thank you.

I appreciate that, Father. It's worth considering the Good Book when you're thinking about immigration. I mean—this Christmas season, there's a whole story about a young, soon-to-be mother and her husband of modest means looking for a place to house themselves for the night, and there's no room at the inn.

And as I said the day that I announced these executive actions, we were once strangers too. And part of what my faith teaches me is to look upon the stranger as part of myself. And during this Christmas season, that's a good place to start.

So thank you for your generous comment. But if we're serious about the Christmas season, now is a good time to reflect on those who are strangers in our midst and remember what it was like to be a stranger.

White House aide. Last question.

The President. Last question. That was a pretty good place to end though. [*Laughter*] I've got to admit. I kind of want to—but I'm going to call on one more person. Gentlemen, you can all put your hands down. I'm going to call on this young lady right here.

Child Migration From Central America to the U.S./Immigration Reform Legislation

Q. Hi, Mr. President. My name is Amanda Donovan. I'm an immigration attorney. And I wonder, what are the things that you deem necessary for comprehensive immigration reform if Congress does act soon?

The President. Well, the Senate bill is a pretty good place to start. I do think there's more work we can do at the borders. As I said before, it's not just a matter of pouring money down there.

I'll give you one very simple example. You'll recall that some of the politics of this shifted during the summer when these unaccompanied children were here. And there was 2 weeks of wall-to-wall coverage. And we were being invaded by 8- and 12- and 13-year-olds. I mean it was just terrifying, apparently. But it reflected a serious problem. You had smugglers, coyotes, who were essentially taking money from family members here, shuttling these kids up. It wasn't that they weren't apprehended. It wasn't like they snuck through the border. What happened was, they basically presented themselves at the border. They'd come in. And because there are so few immigration judges down there, because we hadn't done a very good job cooperating with Central America and Mexico to deal—go after these smugglers, you'd then have a situation in which the kids would oftentimes simply be released to the family member, and then that was the end of things.

And so one of the things that we've done is—well, several things we did. Number one, the—I met with the Central American leaders down there and said, listen, you can't—you've got to do something to message to families down here: Do not send your children on a dangerous path like this because we don't know how many of them might have gotten killed, gotten abducted, trafficked in some terrible way. We have no way of keeping track of that. So you can't have them take this dangerous journey.

And to their credit, those Central American countries worked with us. We said to Mexico, you've got to do something more about the southern border. They did that. We now have the number of unaccompanied children below the rate that it was 2 years ago. So this was a momentary spike.

But also what we need to do is make sure that we have enough immigration lawyers down there that you can process kids and immigration judges to process kids in a timely fashion, but with due process so that if they have legitimate refugee claims, those can be presented, and if not, then they can be returned home.

So that's not a strict border issue. It's not a fence issue. It's "have you set up a sensible process" issue. So I think that's one pillar.

Second pillar is improving the legal immigration system. I already mentioned this, but I'll just repeat a couple of examples. Somebody who potentially qualifies to be a resident here, forcing them to leave the country and then waiting for years before they come back when they've got family members here, that's just not how the human heart works. It's very hard to expect somebody to do that.

Let's have a more sensible, streamlined system. Let's reduce some of the backlogs that already exist for people who actually qualify, but it's just they're waiting in line so long that they get frustrated. Let's do something for especially talented and skilled people who are graduating. We educate them. Don't—we should be stapling a green card to the graduates of top schools in fields that we know we need. And by the way, we can charge fees that we then use to make sure that American kids are getting the kinds of scholarships and training they need for those same jobs in the future.

We need to do more work. We need to deal with the agricultural sector. I'm generally skeptical when you hear employers say, well, we just can't find any Americans to do the job. A lot of times what they really mean is, it's a lot cheaper if we potentially hire somebody who has just come here before they know better in terms of what they're worth.

But in the agricultural sector, there's truth. We enjoy a lot of cheap fruits and vegetables and food stuffs because of the back-breaking work of farm workers. And we should find a system that is fair, make sure that they are not subject to exploitation, and helps us run the economy. We should make sure that we're cracking down on employers who are purposely hiring undocumented workers so that they can get around minimum wage laws or overtime laws and so forth.

And finally, as I've discussed this whole afternoon, we should get people out of the shadows. And the Senate bill, I thought, had a sensible approach, which said: You know what, if you've been here a certain amount of time, you've got a clean record, you're willing to submit yourself to a background check, you're willing to pay back-taxes, you're willing to pay a fine, learn English, go to the back of the line—but if you do all that—you can stay here for now, and we're going to put you on a pathway where eventually you can earn your citizenship, although it will be many years into the future because we still have to clear out those folks who did it the right way.

This has—this concept, what I just described, that package—has bipartisan support. It's not that it doesn't have bipartisan support. The challenge is, is that there's a certain segment—primarily within the Republican Party, although in fairness, in the Democratic Party, there are some people who are resistant as well—who just keep on believing this notion of, that's amnesty, that's amnesty.

And what amnesty implies, I think, in the minds of the American people is that you're getting something for nothing, that you're getting over. And when you describe for people that, in fact, you do have to get a background check, you do have to register, you do have to pay fines, you do have to pay back-taxes, then people feel differently. But that's never advertised by opponents. And that's one reason why, by the way, that I've said to immigrant rights groups, you have to describe the responsibility side of this and not just the rights side of this. Because I think sometimes—I appreciate immigrant rights groups—they speak from the heart, and they know the people involved, and they love them, and they want to just do right by them. And I get that.

But this is where you need to look at the other side of the equation. And what people feel like is, you know what, if you're just coming here for nothing—and I don't know that you're paying your taxes—and you broke the

law and now suddenly, I'm paying for your kid's school and your kid's hospitalization, and it feels unfair, at a time when people are already feeling burdened by their own challenges, trying to afford their own kid's college education, or feeling like they're worried about their own retirement.

So the language we use, I think, is important. You have to speak to the fact that, if somebody broke the law—even if they're good people—they've got to be held accountable. And there are going to be responsibilities involved in it. Because if it's just rights and no responsibilities, then people feel resentful.

Does that make sense? All right, guys, I enjoyed spending time with you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:26 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Renata Soto, cofounder and executive director, Conexión Américas; Frances Dean, daughter of Mayor Karl F. Dean of Nashville; and White House Trip Director Marvin D. Nicholson, Jr. He also referred to S. 744.

Statement on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Study of the Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program
December 9, 2014

Throughout our history, the United States of America has done more than any other nation to stand up for freedom, democracy, and the inherent dignity and human rights of people around the world. As Americans, we owe a profound debt of gratitude to our fellow citizens who serve to keep us safe, among them the dedicated men and women of our intelligence community, including the Central Intelligence Agency. Since the horrific attacks of 9/11, these public servants have worked tirelessly to devastate core Al Qaida, deliver justice to Usama bin Laden, disrupt terrorist operations, and thwart terrorist attacks. Solemn rows of stars on the Memorial Wall at the CIA honor those who have given their lives to protect ours. Our intelligence professionals are patriots, and we are safer because of their heroic service and sacrifices.

In the years after 9/11, with legitimate fears of further attacks and with the responsibility to prevent more catastrophic loss of life, the previous administration faced agonizing choices about how to pursue Al Qaida and prevent additional terrorist attacks against our country. As I have said before, our Nation did many things right in those difficult years. At the same time, some of the actions that were taken were contrary to our values. That is why I unequivocally banned torture when I took office, because one of our most effective tools in fighting terrorism and keeping Americans safe is staying true to our ideals at home and abroad.

Today's report by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence details one element of our Nation's response to 9/11: the CIA's detention and interrogation program, which I formally ended on one of my first days in office. The report documents a troubling program involving enhanced interrogation techniques on terrorism suspects in secret facilities outside the United States, and it reinforces my long-held view that these harsh methods were not only inconsistent with our values as [a]* nation, they did not serve our broader counterterrorism efforts or our national security interests. Moreover, these techniques did significant damage to America's standing in the world and made it harder to pursue our interests with allies and partners. That is why I will continue to use my authority as President to make sure we never resort to those methods again.

As Commander in Chief, I have no greater responsibility than the safety and security of the American people. We will therefore continue to be relentless in our fight against Al Qaida, its affiliates, and other violent extremists. We will rely on all elements of our national

* White House correction.

power, including the power and example of our founding ideals. That is why I have consistently supported the declassification of today's report. No nation is perfect. But one of the strengths that makes America exceptional is our willingness to openly confront our past, face our imperfections, make changes, and do better. Rather than another reason to refight old arguments, I hope that today's report can help us leave these techniques where they belong: in the past. Today is also a reminder that upholding the values we profess doesn't make us weaker, it makes us stronger, and that the United States of America will remain the greatest force for freedom and human dignity that the world has ever known.

Remarks at the White House Summit on Early Education
December 10, 2014

The President. Thank you. Hey! Give Elajah—give Alajah a big round of applause. Thank you so much. Everybody have a seat.

Now, Alajah clearly knows where power is. [*Laughter*] She knows who has clout and who does not. You did a wonderful job. I'm so proud of you. Good job.

Student Alajah Lane of West Education Campus in Washington, DC. Thank you.

The President. You're welcome. [*Laughter*] In addition to Alajah, we have some important personages here. I want to thank, first of all, America's Secretary of Education—somebody who is so passionate about making sure every child gets a chance in this country—Arne Duncan. Where's Arne? We've got some of early education's strongest supporters in Congress from both parties who are here. We've got Bob Casey from the great State of Pennsylvania. We've got Representatives Richard Hanna—where's Richard? There he is—Jared Polis, Bobby Scott.

I want to thank the business leaders and philanthropists and mayors, all who came here from across America to make big new commitments to our kids. And I know we've got thousands of parents and teachers and alumni from Head Start and Early Head Start watching this live in New Orleans and Fort Lauderdale. So please give them a shout-out as well. Thank you, guys.

Now, you may know that last week brought some good economic news, building on the momentum that we've seen over the past couple of years. Over the first 11 months of 2014, our economy has created more jobs than in any full year since the 1990s. So, already—we've still got a month to go—we've already seen more jobs created this year than any time in over a decade. Over the last 4 years, America has put more people back to work than Europe, Japan, and every other advanced economy combined. Overall wages are rising again, which is a welcome sign for millions of families. So, for all the work we have left to do, America is outpacing most of the world. And if we seize this moment, we have the chance to lead the next century just like we led the last one and make sure that citizens in this country, our children, can have a better life than we did.

But in order to reach our full potential, kids like Alajah need a chance to reach their full potential. Because what makes America exceptional isn't just the size of our economy or the—our influence around the globe. That is a byproduct of a more fundamental fact about America: the promise we make to our children; the idea that no matter who they are, what they look like, where they start, how much their parents earn, they can make it if they try. It's the essential promise of America, that where you start should not and will not determine how far you can go.

And we're here today because it's never too early in a child's life to begin delivering on that promise. I'm preaching to the choir now, but I'm going to go ahead and preach. [*Laughter*] Study after study shows that children who get a high-quality early education earn more over their lifetimes than peers who don't. They're more likely to finish school. They're less likely to go to prison. They're more likely to hold a job. They're more likely to start a stable family of their own, which means that you have a

generational transmission of the early starts that kids can get. Early education is one of the best investments we can make not just in a child's future, but in our country. It's one of the best investments we can make.

Today my Council of Economic Advisers is putting out a report showing that for every dollar we invest now, we can save more than $8 later on, by boosting graduation rates, increasing earnings, reducing violent crime. And the study also shows that access to high-quality, affordable childcare means more employment and higher incomes for working parents, especially working moms. Not surprising there. I mean, men, we're getting better, but—[*laughter*]—we're not where we need to be. And moms, all too often, are juggling between work and childcare. When we have good, high-quality early childhood education, then suddenly, we're freeing up everybody to be on the field.

So early education is a win for everybody. It saves taxpayer dollars. It gives our children a better chance. And some States are proving that it's possible to give every child that chance. For 16 years, every child in Oklahoma has been guaranteed a preschool education. Georgia is building on their successful preschool program by launching something called "Talk With Me Baby"—which sounds like an Al Green song, but is actually—[*laughter*]—I'm not singing. I'm not. But it's actually a program to make sure make sure language learning begins at the very first weeks of a child's life. Now, let's face it, Oklahoma and Georgia are not places where I do particularly well politically. They're not known as wild-eyed liberal States. But it just goes to show you that this is an issue that's bigger than politics. It's not a red issue or a blue issue, it's about doing what's best for our kids, for our country, and that's an American issue. And we've had some terrific Republican as well as Democratic Governors and mayors who have really taken leadership on this issue because they recognize it's a good investment.

And that's why, in my 2013 State of the Union Address, I laid out a plan to make sure our children have every opportunity they deserve from the moment they are born. And I asked Congress to work with me to make high-quality pre-K available to every 4-year-old in America. Now, Congress hasn't gotten that done yet, but Democrats and Republicans came together to take some steps in the right direction, with new grants that will expand preschool for children across the country.

And in the nearly 2 years since I called on Congress to take action, we've seen 34 States, along with cities and communities across our country, take action on their own. All told, they're invested—they've invested more than a billion dollars in our children. In Michigan, a Republican Governor signed the nation's second largest State budget increase for early education into law. Last month, voters in Denver approved a ballot measure to renew and expand their preschool program through 2026. In New York, Mayor de Blasio made pre-K for all a centerpiece of his campaign. And this year, more than 50,000 children are enrolled in New York City preschools, more than twice as many as in 2013. So—[*applause*]—must be a New Yorker here.

So we're making progress. But here's the thing: For all the progress we've made, for all the children who are on a better path, today, fewer than 3 in 10 4-year-olds are enrolled in high-quality preschool. It's not that working parents don't want their kids to be in safe, high-quality learning environments every day. It's that they can't afford the costs of private preschool. And for poor children who need it most, the lack of access to a great preschool can affect their entire lives. We've got kids in this country who are every bit as talented as Malia and Sasha, but they're starting out the race a step behind. And they deserve better. And the whole country will do better if we fix that. So that's what this day is all about.

I'm pleased to announce that my administration will award $750 million of new investment in our youngest Americans. Secretary Duncan is awarding $250 million in new Preschool Development Grants to 18 States. We're giving tens of thousands more children the opportunity to go to high-quality preschool. Almost 3,000 preschool students in Nevada, for example, will be able to attend full-

day preschool, instead of a half-day program. Montana will create new high-quality preschool programs that will serve kids in 16 communities, including eight communities on Indian lands.

And in order to create a full pipeline of learning programs, from birth all the way to the beginning of kindergarten, Secretary Burwell is announcing the winners of a $500 million competition that will bring early care and education to more than 30,000 infants and toddlers next year. So our children—childcare centers will partner with our Early Head Start Centers to help kids from virtually every State, from rural Virginia to my hometown of Chicago.

So we're stepping up, but as all of you I'm sure have already heard, investing in our kids is not just the job of the Federal Government, it's the job of all of us. So, in my State of the Union Address this year, I promised to pull together a coalition of elected officials and business leaders and philanthropists who were willing to help more kids access the high-quality preschool that they need. And here you are. [*Laughter*]

Today we are delivering on that promise with a new campaign called "Invest in Us." I want to highlight a few commitments that have been made by people in this room because I think it shows how much interest there is in this issue, how much evidence there is behind making the kinds of investments for our kids that we're talking about.

So, first of all, you're bringing entire communities together on behalf of children. In Northeast Ohio, for example, Cuyahoga County, the city of Cleveland, local schools, businesses, foundations, and child welfare agencies have all embraced a single plan to ensure that all 3- and 4-year-olds have access to high-quality education. So today the greater Cleveland community is announcing $10.2 million in new investments in early childhood programs. And that's going to make a difference. Susie Buffett is leading an effort that will invest $15 million in Omaha. That's making a difference, bringing folks together.

Second, as important as preschool is, you're working to make sure a great education starts even earlier. The George Kaiser Family Foundation reaches out to new parents in Tulsa with a hospital visit before the baby even goes home. After that, they provide parenting classes and literacy programs all the way through a child's third birthday, because they believe that every parent can be a teacher and every home can be a preschool. And as a consequence, they're committing $25 million, in additional dollars, to help achieve that goal.

Number three, you're supporting early education programs that we already have. So the Foundation for Child Development is working with the New York City Department of Education to help train early-learning teachers. Disney is giving away $55 million worth of books and apps for young learners. And judging by trick or treating here at the White House this year, if Disney wanted to throw in some of those princess costumes from "Frozen," that will make a difference. [*Laughter*] I mean, there were a lot of Elsas. They just kept on coming, sort of nonstop. [*Laughter*]

And finally, you're investing in new, innovative approaches that have the chance to transform the way we teach our children. So, thanks to neuroscientists and psychologists and child development experts, we know more about how young minds work than ever before. So we've got the Bezos Family Foundation announcing a $5 million commitment to turn these new insights into new tools for teachers and parents so that our children get the most out of the time and money that we invest in them. And J.B. Pritzker and M.K. Pritzker, their Family Foundation is committing $25 million to build on cutting-edge research to help our most vulnerable children succeed.

So, all told, in addition to what we're going to be doing at the Federal level, organizations here today are making more than $330 million in new commitments. [*Applause*] That's worth applauding. And that's pretty extraordinary. That's real money. Even in Washington, that's real money. [*Laughter*] But it's also just the beginning. So I'm calling on all Americans across our country to make their own commitments to our children. And I'm asking our Members of Congress for their commitment as well. Outside Washington, giving our children a fair

shot from the earliest age is a priority that crosses party lines. So I hope that the new Congress next year will work with me to make pre-K available for all of our kids. It will not just grow the economy for everybody, it will change young lives forever.

Just ask Chuck Mills. Where is Chuck? Chuck is here. There's Chuck, right there. Chuck was born in 1962, youngest of six children, raised by a single mom. A lot of the kids in the neighborhoods where Chuck grew up did not finish school, and a lot of those young people ended up in prison. But in 1966, Chuck's mom saw a flier at a church for a new program called Project Head Start. Chuck became part of just the second class of Head Start students, and 2 years later, he had learned so much that he skipped kindergarten and went straight to first grade. And Chuck's been overachieving ever since. [*Laughter*] Graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, Captain Mills piloted Marine One for two different Presidents. That is something that you want the best people for. [*Laughter*] Today, Chuck is the founder and CEO of not one, but two companies in Northern Virginia. "My life," Chuck said, "can be summed up in the words, 'Wasn't supposed to.'"

"Wasn't supposed to." Well, that's not just Chuck's story; that's America's story. America is a nation that "wasn't supposed to." Our entire story is improbable. All of us are here because this country gave someone in our family a chance to beat the odds. None of us were supposed to. Those of us lucky enough to share in this country's promise now have a responsibility to ensure that for all the young people coming behind us who aren't supposed to, that they have those same opportunities.

There are a whole bunch of Chucks out there, all across the country. We have to invest in them. We have to invest in our communities. We have to invest in us. And if we do that, if we give every child the same chance that we got, then America will remain the greatest nation on Earth. And I thank all of you for the extraordinary efforts you are making in fulfilling that promise. All right?

Thank you, and God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Richard D. Snyder of Michigan; Susan A. Buffett, chairman, Sherwood Foundation; J.B. Pritzker, cofounder and managing partner, Pritzker Group, in his capacity as president of the Pritzker Family Foundation, and his wife Mary Kathryn "M.K." Pritzker; Potomac Falls, VA, resident Charlie H. Mills III; and former Presidents George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton.

Remarks at the Toys for Tots Distribution Center at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling

December 10, 2014

The President. Ho, ho, ho!

The First Lady. [*Laughter*] That's a pretty serious ho, ho, ho.

The President. Ho, ho, ho.

The First Lady. How is everybody doing?

The President. She's doing good.

The First Lady. Happy holidays, merry Christmas.

The President. Merry Christmas.

The First Lady. How are all the kids? Yay. Well, we're happy to be back. As you can see, I brought a little help this year. So I'm excited—welcome to Toys for Tots. Your first year. We're going to break you in slowly, okay?

But let me start—we're not going to talk long because we're here to actually do some work. But I want to just thank everybody who has been involved in this effort. Of course, Lieutenant General Osman, who has just been a tremendous partner for so many years. His leadership is really at the heart of what makes this drive possible.

But also Lieutenant General Richard Mills, Lieutenant Colonel David Johnson, and First Sergeant Lowery as well. Let's give them all a round of applause——

The President. Yay!

The First Lady. ——for their tremendous leadership.

Thank you all for all the hours that you spend picking up the donations, sorting in warehouses all throughout the area. This wouldn't be possible without you and, of course, your wonderful families here who help to make this possible.

We have a couple of other folks here. We've got White House Communications Agency folks and their families. Let's give you guys a round of applause. Thank you all so much for your work.

The President. Yay! WHCA!

The First Lady. And of course, to all of the marines from Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, plus their spouses and all of our military kids. Yay, you guys.

The President. Yay!

The First Lady. As General Osman said, this is the sixth year that I've been involved in Toys for Tots. And every year it's just a tremendous privilege to be able to be a part of making Christmas just a little brighter for a few kids across the country.

And we try to make it a big deal at the White House. We create competitions. I think this year the office that collected the most toys got a Bo and Sonny visit. [*Laughter*] So we did a good job this year. I think this year we're bringing in about a thousand toys from the White House. And so we're proud of our team at the White House for participating.

But we still have a lot of time. And one of the things that I just want to remind the public is that there's still time to donate. And we really want to urge folks out there to do everything in their power to donate to Toys for Tots.

And if you need to find out where to go, all you have to go—do is go to the Toys for Tot website. People can donate online. They can go by one of the dropoff centers. And each year, I kind of remind people that at times, one of the challenges is making sure we have enough toys for the older kids. It's always fun to buy the Barbie dolls and the coloring books, but we have to remember that there are teenagers out there too that need those gifts. And we try to make it a point to make sure that we're buying cool clothes for kids and electronic products and educational materials for teenagers as well.

So, if you haven't already donated, don't forget our teenagers. They are looking for a merry Christmas as well.

So with that, I'm going to turn it over to my new helper, who I brought along with me. He is—he doesn't need any introductions. I don't know how good he'll be with sorting—[*laughter*]—because he doesn't usually deal in shopping in any kind of way. But we'll watch him closely to see if he can figure out which ones are girls, zero to 2, or unisex. It gets really complicated. So watch him, because he could really make your work harder.

So with that, it's my pleasure to introduce my husband, the President of the United States.

The President. Hey! Thank you. Thank you. I'm the big elf. [*Laughter*] I'm like Will Ferrell. [*Laughter*] It is great to be here. I'm not going to talk long. I just want to say thanks to all of you for participating. I want to say thank you to Toys for Tots. Quick statistic: Since it started in the 1940s, Toys for Tots has distributed more than 469 million toys to more than 216 million children. I mean, that's a lot of dollhouses, that's a lot of Ninja Turtles.

But really what Toys for Tots is about is generosity and giving back. All of us are so blessed. Look at these beautiful kids here and wonderful families. And we are lucky. We're lucky, first and foremost, to live in the United States of America, and we're lucky to be able to look after our kids, and there are parents out there who love their kids just as much, but are going through a tough time. And for us to be able to make sure that that holiday spirit extends a little bit beyond just our family, but to people all around the country, it is a wonderful contribution.

While I'm here, I just want to say thank you to our Marine Corps for their extraordinary

work. Our men and women in uniform and our military families don't just work to keep us safe, they're also strengthening our country here at home. They're volunteering at schools, congregations, our communities. With our combat mission coming to a close in Afghanistan, it means more of our extraordinary military members are going to be home for the holidays, back where they belong. And that is the most important blessing of all.

But what's also great is that we're now seeing our incredible military—some who may be leaving the military—able to provide that same dedication, that same sense of service to organizations throughout the country, sometimes in a volunteer capacity, sometimes in a professional capacity. And we are very proud of that. Lieutenant General Osman is just a great example of the ongoing spirit of duty and service that is instilled in our Armed Forces. So we are so grateful to all of you.

With that, I want to wish everybody a merry Christmas, a happy New Year, and let's get sorting. I am positive that girls, zero to 2, that's perfect for the "Call of Duty" video game. [*Laughter*] Isn't that right?

The First Lady. The what video game?

The President. See, she didn't even get the joke. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. I wasn't listening.

The President. She wasn't listening to me. [*Laughter*] Thank you, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:42 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to actor J. William Ferrell in his role as Buddy the Elf in the movie "Elf"; and Lt. Gen. Henry P. Osman, USMC (Ret.), in his capacity as president and chief executive officer of Toys for Tots. The First Lady referred to Lt. Gen. Richard P. Mills, USMC, commander, Marine Forces Reserve; Lt. Col. David A. Johnson, USMC, Second Civil Affairs Group; and First Sgt. Ocie L. Lowery, USMC.

Statement on the Death of Judy Baar Topinka
December 10, 2014

Michelle and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Illinois State Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka. Judy was an institution in Illinois politics. Her public service spanned more than 30 years, including her tenure in the State legislature and as chair of the Illinois Republican Party. Judy was a fierce advocate for her constituents, which I got to see firsthand when she was State treasurer, the first woman to hold that office. She was blunt, pragmatic, unfailingly cheerful and energetic, and always willing to put politics aside to find commonsense solutions that made a difference for the people of Illinois. She will be greatly missed. Michelle and I extend our deepest sympathies to Judy's family, friends, and constituents today.

Remarks at a Meeting of the President's Export Council and an Exchange With Reporters
December 11, 2014

[*The President joined the meeting in progress.*]

The President. I'm so sorry I'm late, people. Usually, I've been on—I'm a pretty timely guy. [*Laughter*] But it seems like there's quite a few things on my agenda today. [*Laughter*] But I think we're going to bring in the pool. And I'm just going to make some quick remarks at the top, and then everybody can fill me in on the great work that the Council's been doing. Tell me when you're ready, everybody. All good?

White House aide. We're all set.

The President. Well, good morning, everybody. I just want to offer a few thoughts before you return to the meeting. Obviously, we've seen some significant economic progress here

in the United States over the last year. Our businesses have added almost 11 million jobs over the past 57 months. This year, our economy has already created more jobs [than]* in any year since the 1990s, with still a month to go. All told, since 2010, we've created more jobs here in the United States than Japan, Europe, and all advanced nations combined.

And one of the reasons that we've been able to create so many jobs here in the United States is because our exports have been strong. Last year, our businesses sold a record $2.3 trillion of "Made in America" goods and services. And these exports support more than 11 million American jobs, typically, by the way, jobs that pay higher wages.

And so this Council is designed to build on this progress. It is in part a factor in the progress that we've made. We've had some terrific suggestions from some of our leading businesses, but also some small businesses and medium-sized businesses who are starting to sell overseas. The recommendations that have been generated by these—the Council have then been implemented by our various agencies. And we're here not to rest on our laurels, but rather to continue to make a big push to sell even more overseas.

I've said before, I will go anywhere around the world to go to bat for American companies and American workers. We're going to keep on pushing trade agreements that benefit American companies and American workers and ensure that we've got a fair and even playing field, particularly in the fastest growing markets. We're going to work with Congress to try to renew trade promotion authority and secure approval for a very ambitious Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, which would create a higher standard for trade in the fastest growing, most populous and dynamic region in the world, the Asia-Pacific region.

We're also announcing—because manufacturing has been a real bright spot in our growing economy—some additional measures to boost manufacturing here in the United States so we can sell more manufacturing goods overseas. We're announcing today more than $290 million in new investments to launch two additional high-tech manufacturing hubs. One is going to be focusing on flexible computer chips that can be woven into everything from the gears in a helicopter to the fabric in your shirt. Another is going to focus on advance sensors that can dramatically cut energy costs for our factories.

So far, we have launched 8 of these hubs, and we intend to get 16 done, so we're more than half of the way there. And they're helping us to compete for the next generation of manufacturing. One of the reasons that manufacturing has been growing faster here than the overall economy is because of real savings on the energy front, outstanding workers, but also, because our companies have retooled and once again made that investment in innovation that has been the hallmark of American manufacturing for years.

I also want to thank many of the folks around this room who've been working with us to find ways that we can increase and improve the pipeline for skilled workers going into the companies that ultimately end up exporting goods and services overseas. To make sure that our workers have those skills, today my Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, is announcing a $100 million competition to help expand apprenticeship programs across our country. Many of the companies around this table have helped design it or are already participating in these apprenticeship programs. They give talented, motivated young people the chance to get an outstanding career. They get a pathway, a door open to them, that allows them to succeed and secure a position in the middle class, and it helps us recruit the kind of workers that are going to keep us competitive for years to come.

Finally, we've got real opportunities to make some bipartisan progress this year on some areas that will make us more competitive in this global marketplace. For example, today, our companies face the highest corporate tax rate in the world on paper. There are so many

* White House correction.

loopholes that some end up paying a much lower rate; some pay the full freight. It distorts our allocation of capital. It makes us less competitive relative to businesses that are headquartered overseas. We need to fix that. And I think that there's genuine interest on both the Democratic and Republican side in making that happen.

And so I just want to thank everybody on the Export Council for the outstanding work that you've already done. I'm looking forward to hearing about the recommendations that you have generated during the course of this meeting. And rest assured that I will be your partner for the remainder of my time in this office, making sure that we have the strongest, most competitive companies, the best workers, the best research and development, and the highest exports that we've ever seen in our history. All right?

Thank you very much.

Thanks, pool. Thank you, pool.

Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program

Q. Mr. President, do you agree with John Brennan that the CIA's interrogation program saved lives?

The President. We're talking about exports, Jon [Jonathan Karl, ABC News]. Thank you. All right.

[*At this point, the press pool was escorted out of the room, and the meeting continued.*]

President's Export Council Chairman W. James McNerney, Jr. Listen, thank you very much, Mr. President. If you look historically at the PEC, there has never been a time in its history where the administration, you personally, and the people on your Cabinet have supported this group to a greater extent. And we feel that engagement, and your presence here today once again makes that point. It energizes us, and I think it moves the agenda along.

What we did today, we focused heavily on trade with Ambassador Froman. I'd like to maybe come back and get your perspective on how we're going to move that forward. Everybody in the room is leaning forward in every kind of way to get that done.

I think we reported out on the basis of six of our subcommittees' recommendations we're going to send to you, which you will get in due course. I think the other thing we talked about was a fact-finding trip we made to Turkey and Poland, which I think gave everybody in this group an on-the-ground understanding of the leadership—the impact of the leadership of Penny and Mike and others on furthering our—on furthering things along.

But I think if there were two things I would just sort of tee up—and I know we have limited time with you—one would be getting these things done. We all think it's the right time, and you've suggested that to us at the BRT and some other places. Any comments you'd have for us to help you get it done.

And then the other thing that came up is China. You've spent a lot of time with President Xi personally connecting. Penny is going to take the leadership role, starting in Chicago next week, JCCT. We're trying to engage. But any comments on China would be—those are sort of the themes that came out of the group this morning.

The President. Yes. Well, if you heard from Mike Froman, then you heard from——

Chairman McNerney. The Oracle. [*Laughter*]

The President. ——the guy who's in the trenches on these trade negotiations. I'll just give you a couple of quick top lines.

First of all, I'm much more optimistic about us being able to close out an agreement with our TPP partners than I was last year. Doesn't mean that it's a done deal, but I think the odds of us being able to get a strong agreement are significantly higher than 50–50, whereas last year I think it was still, sort of, up for grabs.

The question then becomes, assuming we are able to get the kind of agreement that is good for American workers and good for American businesses, how do we proceed in Congress? I think that despite the fact that we had an election I did not—I wasn't that happy with—[*laughter*]—the dynamics really don't change in terms of the number of votes in the House and the Senate that are there to be got-

ten for a good trade deal. But we have to make the case. And I think we can make a very strong case that what we're doing here is really setting a higher bar that will give us more access to markets, will give us greater IP protection, will make sure that U.S. companies both in goods and in services are less disadvantaged by nontariff barriers and state support and procurement practices in these countries than they've been in the past.

The pushback that we're going to get domestically derives from a couple of sources. One is from not just labor—not just organized labor, but a public perception generally that trade has resulted in an erosion of our manufacturing base as companies moved overseas in search of lower wage labor. And my essential response to those arguments is not to deny that there have been some consequences to China's accession to the WTO and offshoring, but rather, that that horse is out of the barn. We are now in the worst of all worlds where they have access to our markets, much of that shift in search of low-wage labor has already occurred, and yet we don't have the access to those markets that are growing and no levers to force these other countries to increase their labor standards and their environmental standards.

So that instead of fighting the last war, what we need to be doing is looking forward. And there's no doubt that what Mike is negotiating creates higher labor standards and greater access than the status quo. And that's what we should be measuring against.

I'll give you just one very specific example, and that's Vietnam. I mean, Vietnam is probably the most interesting country involved in these negotiations: A, it's still a one-party system that provides workers very few rights, if any; and yet, in order to be part of TPP, they're having to make some pretty radical shifts in how they treat workers. Now, it's—they're not going to suddenly have the same labor standards as Germany does, but there's going to be an improvement. And by us establishing a baseline for labor rights even in a country that has traditionally had no labor rights, we're improving our position, not deteriorating our position.

The same is true for the other set of critics that we may receive, and that is from the environmental community, although, there's a—divisions between the large environmental groups. As I said at the BRT, I don't know exactly what Malaysia's environmental rules are, but I guarantee you, they are lower than ours. [*Laughter*] And it—for us to be able to include in a TPP agreement basic environmental standards is a win for us. It puts us not at a disadvantage, it puts us at more of an advantage.

The final criticism—not the final, but another criticism that we're going to receive domestically is this issue of—what's the term of art in terms of lawsuits?

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Right. And we've looked at the facts, and generally speaking, I think the language that's being used allows every country to maintain its public health and safety and welfare provisions. Really, what we're trying to get at here is making sure that foreign companies are not treated differently than domestic companies. That's the primary concern, is a discriminatory application of rules in ways that are arbitrary. And I think that that's something that all of us should agree on.

The big bugaboo that's lifted up there is tobacco companies suing poorer countries to make sure that antismoking legislation is banned or at least tying them up with so much legislation—or so much litigation that ultimately, smaller countries cave.

Those are issues that I think can be negotiated. There are some areas of particular sensitivity or concern. But overall, the principle that we should make sure that U.S. companies, when they invest or export to other countries, are abiding with their safety rules, but that those public health and safety rules are not being discriminatorily applied or a ruse in order to keep us out. That should be something everybody is in favor of.

So, in terms of timing, how TPP happens versus TPA, I think regardless of the sequence, we're going to have to make the sale, and it's going to be very important for business to be out there and champion this and show that this is ultimately good for you, for your suppliers,

for your workers. And if you look at all the major exporters, you take a Boeing, presumably in every congressional district, you've got to find——

Chairman McNerney. A bunch of suppliers.

The President. ——a bunch of suppliers who are making the case, and their workers are making the case. So it's not just a bunch of CEOs calling, but it's people who understand that they've got a stake in it.

So I think that's on the labor front. On China, all of what we're doing with TPP has a direct application to China. China is actually not that complicated. They will take whatever they can get. They will exploit every advantage that they have until they meet some resistance. But they have a great interest in the relationship with the United States and recognize the interdependence that has evolved between our two economies.

And so the key with China, I think, is to continue to simply press them on those areas where trade is imbalanced, whether it's on their currency practices, whether it's on IP protection, whether it's on their state-owned enterprises. The business investment treaty that they have shown an interest in negotiating could end up being a significant piece of business. We actually saw some movement during my last trip on issues surrounding technology. And I think that it's indicative of their interest in trying to get this right.

And by the way, if we get—there's been some suggestion that by doing TPP we're trying to contain or disadvantage China. We're actually not. What we are trying to do is make sure that rather than a race to the bottom in the region, there's a reasonable bar within which we can operate. And we hope that then China actually joins us in not necessarily formally being a member of TPP, but in adopting some of the best practices that ensure fairness in operations.

So—and the climate change announcement that we made was very significant. For those of you who are impacted by the power plant rule that the EPA is initiating here, it's good to know that one of the arguments that's always been made about us dealing with climate change or environmental issues generally here in the United States is, well, it puts us at a disadvantage with China. Well, we're trying to take away that excuse by making sure that China is also abiding by higher standards and in a verifiable way. So we're going to be focused on that. Okay?

Chairman McNerney. Do you have time for one more question?

The President. One more question.

Chairman McNerney. I think one of the things we talked about this morning with Vice President Biden was Russia sanctions. And I think, by and large, the business community, while there's some debate about exactly to what degree this, that, or the other thing, that these have been implemented very successfully and very methodically, worked well with the business community to maximize impact, while minimizing impact to us.

And so there was a pretty robust discussion that I think many of us in the room ended up saying, whether we're in the third inning or the eighth inning, just keep moving. And then, there's a lot of support in the business community for what you're doing, keeping Europe lined up, which is our biggest concern. Merkel seems to be hanging in there. And anyway, the Vice President gave us a very robust discussion. Any views from you? I know you've talked to a lot of your peers on the subject.

The President. Joe has been very close to this, so he probably gave you a pretty sound overview. I think you identified what's been important in this process, and that is our ability to keep Europe in lockstep with us. There may be some movement out of Congress for us to get out ahead of Europe further. We have argued that that would be counterproductive. And we may need some help from the business community in making that argument to the soon-to-be chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and others.

Putin does not have good cards, and he actually has not played them as well as sometimes the Western press seems to give him credit for. There's been an improvisational quality to this whole process because the situation in Ukraine actually took Russia by surprise. And it's work-

ing for him politically, domestically, but profoundly damaging in terms of their economy long term, not just short term.

Where Putin will succeed is if it creates a rift in the transatlantic relationship. If you start seeing Europe divided from the United States, that would be a strategic victory. And I'm intent on preventing that. And the way to prevent it is making sure that we are taking into account the very real economic impact on Europe from these sanctions, being measured in terms of how we apply them, and having some strategic patience.

The notion that we can simply ratchet up sanctions further and further and further, and then, ultimately, Putin changes his mind I think is a miscalculation. What will ultimately lead to Russia making a strategic decision is if they recognize that Europe is standing with us and will be in it for the long haul and we are in fact patient. And if they see that there aren't any cracks in the coalition, then, over time, you could see them saying that the costs to their economy outweigh whatever strategic benefits that they get.

So you've got, I'm sure, everything about Ukraine, soup to nuts, from Joe. I'll just emphasize as a takeaway for the business community that we are being—we have been successful with sanctions precisely because we've been systematic about it and made sure there wasn't a lot of daylight between us and the Europeans. That should continue. And even though sometimes, it's tempting for us to say we can go further, it won't benefit—it won't do us any good if it means suddenly, Europe peels off and then are backfilling various things that U.S. companies are obliged to abide by.

All right?

Chairman McNerney. Terrific. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you for the great work you're doing. Keep it up.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:30 a.m. in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Robert P. Corker, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and President Vladimir Vladmirovich Putin of Russia. Chairman McNerney referred to Secretary of Commerce Penny S. Pritzker; and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany. He also referred to the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT).

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Global Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces

December 11, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. Armed Forces equipped for combat.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM OBJECTIVES

In furtherance of U.S. counterterrorism efforts, the United States continues to work with partners around the globe, with a particular focus on the U.S. Central Command's and U.S. Africa Command's areas of responsibility. In this context, the United States has deployed U.S. combat-equipped forces to enhance the counterterrorism capabilities and support the counterterrorism operations of our friends and allies, including special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations around the world. Specific information about counterterrorism deployments to select countries is provided below, and a classified annex to this report provides further information.

Military Operations Against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and Associated Forces and in Support of Related U.S. Counterterrorism Objectives

Since October 7, 2001, the United States has conducted combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated forces. In support of these and other overseas operations, the United States has deployed combat-equipped forces to a number of locations in the U.S. Central, Pacific, European, Southern, and Africa Command areas of operation. Such operations and deployments have been reported previously, consistent with Public Law 107–40 and the War Powers Resolution, and operations and deployments remain ongoing. These operations, which the United States has carried out with the assistance of numerous international partners, have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qa'ida's capabilities and brought an end to the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan. If necessary, in response to this terrorist threat, I will direct additional measures to protect U.S. citizens and interests. It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployments of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter this terrorist threat to the United States.

Afghanistan. United States Armed Forces have transitioned the lead for security to Afghan security forces while striking significant blows against al-Qa'ida's leadership and preventing Afghanistan from being used to launch attacks against our homeland. On May 27, 2014, I announced my decision to end the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan at the end of 2014, and to maintain a limited number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan beyond the end of 2014. These forces in Afghanistan will be for the purposes of training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces and supporting counterterrorism operations against the remnants of al-Qa'ida.

The U.N. Security Council most recently extended its authorization of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan until December 31, 2014, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2120 (October 10, 2013). The mission of ISAF, under North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) command and in partnership with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, is to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and facilitate improvements in governance and socioeconomic development in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability. For the last few years, the ISAF campaign has focused on preparing the ANSF for full security transition in 2014.

Since June 2013, the ANSF have been in the lead for security nationwide and have been conducting the overwhelming majority of operations. ISAF is now in support of the ANSF, and the only unilateral operations that ISAF conducts are in support of its own security, sustainment, and redeployment. During the remainder of its campaign, ISAF will continue to focus on developing the sustainability of the ANSF at the corps and ministerial levels. The security transition process—as agreed to at the 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon and reaffirmed at the 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago—remains on track, and the ANSF are expected to assume full responsibility for security across the whole of Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

Following the completion of the ISAF mission at the end of 2014, the mission to help train, advise, and assist the ANSF and Afghan ministries and institutions will continue through the follow-on NATO-led Resolute Support Mission.

Today, there are approximately 15,000 U.S. forces in Afghanistan. The U.S. Armed Forces are on track to draw down to a Force Management Level of 9,800 by early 2015. (The actual number of U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan may exceed this Force Management Level due to, for example, overlap during rotations of units and the continued presence of forces with the single mission of supporting the retrograde of U.S. equipment, both of which are excluded from counting against the Force Management Level.) By the end of 2016, U.S. forces would draw down to a small presence at our embassy in Kabul, focusing primarily on security assistance activities. The United States would continue to work with our Afghan part-

ners to pursue the remnants of al-Qa'ida and more broadly to work with our partners in the region to continue to detect and disrupt extremist threats.

As I noted in my report of June 12, 2014, on March 25, 2013, the United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of Afghanistan under which the United States transferred all Afghan nationals detained by U.S. forces in Afghanistan to the custody and control of the Afghan government. Pursuant to the MOU, any new Afghan detainees are to be transferred to Afghan custody and control within 96 hours after capture. United States forces in Afghanistan continue to detain a small number of third-country nationals under the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40), as informed by the law of war.

Iraq and Syria. In order to provide support and security to U.S. personnel and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and as part of a comprehensive strategy to degrade and ultimately defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), I authorized, earlier this year, the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces to Iraq. These deployments of U.S. forces, which I reported to the Congress in a series of reports in recent months, are conducting coordination with Iraqi forces and providing training, communications support, intelligence support, and other support to select elements of the Iraqi security forces, including Kurdish Peshmerga forces. Additionally, these forces are conducting a systematic campaign of airstrikes and other necessary actions against ISIL forces in Iraq and Syria and airstrikes against elements of al-Qa'ida known as the Khorasan Group in Syria. The Force Management Level for U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq currently is 3,100 personnel.

These actions are being undertaken in coordination with and at the request of the Government of Iraq and in conjunction with coalition partners.

Somalia. In Somalia, a small contingent of U.S. military personnel, including some special operations forces, has worked to counter the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida and associated elements of al-Shabaab. On September 1, 2014, U.S. forces conducted an airstrike in Somalia that killed the emir of the terrorist group al-Shabaab, Ahmed Abdi al-Muhammad, also known as Ahmed Godane.

Yemen. The U.S. military has also been working closely with the Government of Yemen to operationally dismantle and ultimately eliminate the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the most active and dangerous affiliate of al-Qa'ida today. Our joint efforts have resulted in direct action against a limited number of AQAP operatives and senior leaders in that country who posed a terrorist threat to the United States and our interests.

Cuba. Combat-equipped forces, deployed since January 2002 to the Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, continue to conduct humane and secure detention operations for the 142 detainees at Guantanamo Bay under the authority provided by the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40), as informed by the law of war.

Military Operations in Niger in Support of U.S. Counterterrorism Objectives

As indicated in my report of December 13, 2013, U.S. military personnel in Niger continue to provide support for intelligence collection and to facilitate intelligence sharing with French forces conducting operations in the Sahel and with other partners in the region. The total number of U.S. military personnel deployed to Niger is approximately 200.

Military Operations in Chad in Support of Efforts to Locate Schoolgirls Kidnapped in Nigeria

The deployment of U.S. military personnel to Chad to support U.S. intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations has concluded. A small number of U.S. military personnel remain deployed to Chad for security cooperation activities.

MILITARY OPERATIONS RELATED TO THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

In October and November 2011, U.S. military personnel with appropriate combat equipment initially deployed to Uganda to serve as advisors to regional forces of the African Union Regional Task Force (AU–RTF) that are working to apprehend or remove Joseph Kony and other senior Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leaders from the battlefield, and to protect local populations. United States forces deployed to central Africa also operate and maintain U.S. aircraft providing air mobility support to foreign partner forces. The aircraft and personnel providing the enhanced air mobility support will deploy to the LRA-affected areas of central Africa episodically, as they are available, consistent with other Department of Defense requirements. During these deployments, the number of U.S. military personnel deployed to the central Africa region, including advisors deployed for this mission and personnel providing logistical and support functions to this and other missions, will fluctuate at a level up to approximately 300.

United States forces are working with select partner nation forces of the AU–RTF to enhance cooperation, information-sharing and synchronization, operational planning, and overall effectiveness. These forces, however, will not engage LRA forces except in self-defense. It is in the U.S. national security interest to help our regional partners in Africa to develop their capability to address threats to regional peace and security, including the threat posed by the LRA. The United States is pursuing a comprehensive strategy to help the governments and people of this region in their efforts to end the threat posed by the LRA and to address the impact of the LRA's atrocities.

Additional information about military operations related to the Lord's Resistance Army is provided in the classified annex.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN EGYPT

Approximately 700 military personnel are assigned to the U.S. contingent of the Multinational Force and Observers, which have been present in Egypt since 1981.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN JORDAN

As initially detailed in my report of June 21, 2013, at the request of the Government of Jordan, U.S. Armed Forces elements, including Patriot missile systems, fighter aircraft, and related support, command, control, and communications personnel and systems, are deployed to Jordan to support the security of Jordan and promote regional stability. The total number of U.S. forces in Jordan is approximately 1,700 U.S. military personnel. These forces will remain in Jordan, in full coordination with the Government of Jordan, until the security situation becomes such that they are no longer needed.

U.S./NATO OPERATIONS IN KOSOVO

The U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish a NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Resolution 1244 on June 10, 1999. The original mission of KFOR was to monitor, verify, and, when necessary, enforce compliance with the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the then-Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia), while maintaining a safe and secure environment. Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities in cooperation with local authorities, bilateral partners, and international institutions. The principal military tasks of KFOR forces are to help maintain a safe and secure environment and to ensure freedom of movement throughout Kosovo. The U.S. contribution to KFOR is approximately 700 U.S. military personnel out of the total strength of approximately 4,600 personnel.

REGIONAL SECURITY OPERATIONS

As stated in my report of June 12, 2014, U.S. Armed Forces remain in Yemen to support the security of U.S. personnel. These forces will remain deployed, in full coordination with the respective host governments, until the security situation no longer requires them.

As I noted in my report of July 27, 2014, during the period July 25–26, embassy personnel and the U.S. forces supporting their security were relocated outside Libya. To support the safe departure of the embassy staff from Libya over land through Tunisia, U.S. military aircraft and additional military personnel entered Libya and Tunisia; those forces also departed Libya.

As I noted in my report of September 11, 2014, U.S. Armed Forces deployed to the Central African Republic to support the resumption of the activities of the U.S. Embassy in Bangui. The force is expected to remain in the Central African Republic until it is replaced by an augmented U.S. Security Guard Detachment and additional Department of State civilian security personnel as the security situation allows.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional and statutory authority as Commander in Chief (including the authority to carry out Public Law 107–40 and other statutes), and as Chief Executive, as well as my constitutional and statutory authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Senior Advisers To Discuss Ebola Preparedness and Containment Efforts and an Exchange With Reporters
December 12, 2014

Federal Budget Legislation

The President. Well, let me start by saying a few words about the bill that was passed last night to keep the Government open and make sure that our agencies are funded until the fall of next year.

This, by definition, was a compromise bill. This is what's produced when you have the divided Government that the American people voted for. There are a bunch of provisions in this bill that I really do not like. On the other hand, there are provisions in this bill and the basic funding within this bill that allows us to make sure that we continue on the progress in providing health insurance to all Americans; to make sure that we continue with our efforts to combat climate change; that we're able to expand early childhood education that is making a meaningful difference in communities all across the country; that allows us to expand our manufacturing hubs that are contributing to the growth of jobs and the progress that we've seen in our economy over the last couple of years.

And so, over all, this legislation allows us to build on the economic progress and the national security progress that is important. Had I been able to draft my own legislation and get it passed without any Republican votes, I suspect it would be slightly different. [*Laughter*] That is not the circumstance we find ourselves in. And I think what the American people very much are looking for is some practical governance and the willingness to compromise; that's what this bill reflects. So I'm glad it passed the House, and I'm hopeful that it will pass the Senate.

One of the things that was very important in this legislation was, it allowed us the funding that's necessary to battle ISIL, to continue to support our men and women in uniform. We've put a lot of burdens on our Defense Department and our Armed Services over the last year, some of which were anticipated, some of which were not. And this gives our military, as

well as our other agencies, the ability to plan over the next year with some stability.

Ebola Preparedness and Containment Efforts

Which brings me to the topic of this meeting here today. This bill also contains the necessary funding to continue to make progress on our fight against Ebola both at home and abroad. I know that after a frenzy of news reports for several weeks, Ebola has faded from the headlines. On the other hand, although we have not seen an additional case here in the United States, I have always said that we have to make sure we're prepared here at home and we will not have defeated this disease until we have defeated it where it is most prevalent, and that is in West Africa.

And so I'm going to be hearing about the progress that's been made here in the United States in making sure that our hospitals are properly prepared, that our outstanding health workers are properly trained, and that we have facilities that are regionally dispersed to accommodate the periodic Ebola cases that we may continue to see in the United States until we've eradicated the disease in West Africa. It also allows us to make some progress on our efforts to develop a vaccine.

I was at the NIH a while back—some of you were with me—to see the significant progress and some promising pathways that we're taking with respect to vaccine development, and this legislation allows us to continue with that progress.

It also allows us to continue to do the work that is necessary in West Africa. Because of the remarkable response of our agencies, our military, our health workers, we have been able to take the lead in Liberia and to start bending the curve so that we're on a pathway to defeating the disease in Liberia. But we've still got a lot of work to do. And in two neighboring countries, Guinea and Sierra Leone, we've still got significant problems. Sierra Leone, in particular, we're still seeing an uptick in cases rather than the kind of declining case numbers that we'd like to see.

We know now what we knew in the fight against Ebola in previous epidemics, and that is that if we successfully isolate patients, if we're able to contact trace who has been in contact with somebody with the disease, if we're able to improve on things like burial practices, that we can slowly shrink and ultimately eliminate the disease. That is beginning to take root in Liberia, but we've still got a lot more work to do in these other countries.

Fortunately, we continue to see extraordinary efforts by our health care workers and volunteers from around the world. Here in the United States, we have seen people who are making enormous sacrifices, being separated from their families, in order to deal with this devastating disease. I was very pleased to see Time magazine identify those health workers on the front lines in the fight against Ebola as "Persons of the Year." I can't think of a better choice, because the courage, skill, professionalism that they display every single day makes me very proud.

And our American health workers have done a great job, but we want to make sure to give credit to the other countries that are participating in this coalition. We led it, we moved it, we are the most aggressive and out front in getting things done, but we couldn't be doing this alone. And so we've seen participation from countries and allies all across the globe. And we've got to make sure that we stay on top of this.

So I want to thank Congress for including that in the legislation. I'm going to hear reports about lessons learned over the last several weeks, what's worked, what hasn't. We'll continue to make adjustments over time. We have put in place the infrastructure, thanks to the outstanding work of our Armed Services, to get supplies and workers in and out, to be able to medevac those health care workers who end up contracting the disease, making sure that they have decent treatment.

But we've got to stay on this. This is not a problem that is going to go away anytime soon. And until we have snuffed out the last case of Ebola in West Africa, there's always the prospect and, in fact, likelihood that it spreads and could end up coming back to the United States.

So we've got a lot more work to do, just because it's not in the headlines, and that's what this meeting is about. I want to thank everybody here who's been doing a great job on it.

All right. Thank you very much, everybody.

The President's Health

Q. How's your throat? How is the reflux?

The President. You know, actually, I am doing fine. That was a classic example of, if it weren't for the press pool, nobody would know about it. [*Laughter*]

Q. We did a good job, huh?

The President. There's got to be something better to cover than the President's sore throat.

Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:58 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 83; and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Statement on the Situation in South Sudan
December 12, 2014

Last December, when a political conflict erupted into violence in South Sudan, the hope and optimism the world felt with the founding of the new nation in 2011 was overtaken by images of bloodshed and grief. Instead of seeing the promise of their struggle for self-determination realized, the people of South Sudan have suffered countless, unimaginable tragedies. The magnitude of this crisis is felt in both the devastation that violence has left in towns and villages and the scars—visible and invisible—on the South Sudanese people.

Today I appeal to the leaders of South Sudan to pursue peace as a way to honor those who have died. It is in your hands to end the cycle of violence, to set forth on a course of reform and reconciliation, and to hold to account those responsible for atrocities. Leadership that recalls the promise of South Sudan is what the country now needs to end this senseless conflict.

To the people of South Sudan, who have suffered for far too long, I urge you to renew the spirit of hope, unity, and fortitude that enabled you almost 4 years ago to come together and vote for a brighter future. For the sake of future generations, I urge you to seek peaceful reconciliation rather than violent retribution. The United States will remain a friend to those who seek peace and progress and will stand with the people of South Sudan.

The President's Weekly Address
December 13, 2014

Hi, everybody. It's the holidays, a season to give thanks for our many blessings: the love of family, the joy of good friends, the bonds of community, the freedom we cherish as Americans, the peace and justice we seek in the world.

As we go about our days, as we gather with loved ones and friends, it's important to remember: Our way of life—the freedom, prosperity and security that we enjoy as Americans—is not a gift that is simply handed to us. It has to be earned, by every generation. And no one sacrifices more to preserve our blessings than our extraordinary men and women in uniform.

That's why, on Monday, I'll be visiting our troops at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey, to salute them for their service and thank them for their sacrifices. Since our Nation was attacked on 9/11, these men and women, like so many others in uniform, have met every mission we've asked of them. They

deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. In more than a decade of war, this 9/11 generation has worked with the Afghan people to help them reclaim their communities and prevent terrorist attacks against our own country.

Now, many of our troops are returning from Afghanistan, and on Monday, I'll be proud to help welcome them home. That's because, this month, our combat mission in Afghanistan will be over. Our war in Afghanistan is coming to a responsible end.

Of course, the end of our combat mission in Afghanistan doesn't mean the end of challenges to our security. We'll continue to work with Afghans to make sure their country is stable and secure and is never again used to launch attacks against America. The troops I'll visit on Monday have been part of our mission to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL in Iraq and Syria. They've been supporting our efforts in West Africa to fight the Ebola epidemic and save lives. Because in time of crisis and challenge, the world turns to America for leadership. And when the world calls on America, we call on the brave men and women of our armed forces to do what no one else can.

So this holiday season, as we give thanks for the blessings in our own lives, let's also give thanks to our men and women in uniform who make those blessings possible. Even as some are coming home for the holidays, many more will be far from their families, who sacrifice along with them.

There are so many ways we can express our gratitude to our troops, their families and our veterans. Everyone can do something. To find out what you can do, just go to joiningforces.gov. As a nation, as Americans, let's always keep striving to serve them as well as they have always served us.

Thank you, have a great weekend, and God bless our troops and their families.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:40 p.m. on December 12 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 13. In the address, the President referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 12, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 13.

Remarks at "Christmas in Washington"
December 14, 2014

Thank you! Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. Merry Christmas, everybody. Give it up for Santa's biggest, baddest elf: our host, The Rock. Dwayne is tough as nails on the outside, but as you heard earlier, he is a big softie on the inside. Even played me once on "Saturday Night Live." [*Laughter*] You can see the resemblance. I have a little more hair. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all the incredible performers for dazzling us with their talents tonight. Give them a big round of applause. And we want to thank all the people behind the scenes who've helped make this wonderful event possible every single year.

For 33 years, "Christmas in Washington" has benefited a remarkable institution, Children's National Medical Center. That's where dedicated medical professionals provide world-class care to our most precious resource—our children—every single day of the year. Of course, this holiday is all about the birth of a child more than 2,000 years ago. A young soon-to-be mother and her husband of modest means traveled to Bethlehem and sought shelter for the night, and they found it in a manger. And in the lowliest of surroundings, a Savior was born who would change the world.

Jesus Christ lived a life of peace, of love and kindness and forgiveness. He ministered to the poor and to the sick, to the stranger and the outcast on society's margins. His life of service teaches us that our individual salvation is wrapped up in the salvation of others. And two millennia later, it lifts the hearts of billions around the world, Christians and non-Christians alike.

In the hustle and bustle of Christmas season, may we all do our best to follow his exam-

ple, to reach out to someone whose Christmas isn't so jolly, to turn our blessings into kindness and compassion, to treat one another the way we would like to be treated. That's the real Christmas spirit.

To all our men and women in uniform serving far from home and to the families who miss them, we thank you for your service and sacrifice, and we're thinking of you this holiday season. And to every American, from the Obama family to yours, merry Christmas. God bless you, and God bless America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:32 p.m. at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to actor Dwayne D. "The Rock" Johnson.

Remarks to United States Troops and Department of Defense Personnel at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey
December 15, 2014

The President. Hello, McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst! Thank you, General Martin, for the introduction and for your great leadership of the Air Force Expeditionary Center. I want to thank all the outstanding leaders for coming to welcome me here today, including General Maggie Boor and Colonel James Hodges. I want to thank the folks who are the backbone of our military: Give a big round of applause for your incredible senior NCOs.

Now, this is one of our Nation's premier joint military bases. Everybody's here. We've got Army.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. We've got Navy.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. We've got Air Force.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. We've got Marines.

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. And we've got some Coast Guard.

Audience members. Hooah! [*Laughter*]

The President. Who's that one Coast Guard? There you go. That was loud, right there. [*Laughter*]

All of you come together as one great American team. And I know that we also have some spouses and families here today. Your wives, your husbands, your partners, your sons, your daughters—they serve as well. They make their own sacrifices, especially when you're deployed. So our military families are the heroes here in New Jersey. That's what we do all on the homefront. Give it up for our remarkable military families.

We've got some outstanding elected officials who support the mission of this facility each and every day. I want to thank Governor Christie for joining us here today. We've got some outstanding Members of Congress who are here: Bob Menendez, Cory Booker, Congressmen Jon Runyan, Congressman Donald Norcross, and incoming Congressman Tom MacArthur. And they were already lobbying me about the base on the way in, so they're doing a good job. [*Laughter*]

It is great to be back. I was here last year and visited with some of you on my way to the Jersey Shore. Christie and I went down to Asbury Park, spent some time on the boardwalk. We played a little Frog Bog. Chris's kids taught me how to hit the hammer to get those little frogs into the buckets. It was hard. And then, Christie beat me at football toss, which really aggravated me. [*Laughter*] And he bragged about it afterwards, which is okay, but I will get a rematch at some point.

But we weren't there just to have fun. We came because, after Hurricane Sandy, people across this State—including those of you here at this base—you had to pick yourselves up, pull together, rebuild, show that here in New Jersey, here in America, we are stronger than any storm. Like a friend of mine from New Jersey likes to say, "Wherever this flag's flown, we take care of our own." And that's what we do across America.

And this facility exemplifies that spirit. For nearly a century, our flag has flown right here. Millions of Americans passed through the old Fort Dix. This was where they shipped out. This was where they were welcomed home. One of them was Don Drysdale, Hall of Fame Dodgers pitcher. And he had the same thought as a lot of new recruits at basic training: "What the hell am I doing here?" [*Laughter*] Another recruit remembered, "I cleaned a lot of latrines with toothbrushes."

Among those who were demobilized here was a soldier from Tennessee, serial number 53310761, a guy named Sergeant Elvis Presley. He was all shook up. [*Laughter*] His homecoming was a little different though. Apparently, the King drove off in a limo. [*Laughter*] Now, if it were up to me, I'd give all you all limos when you come home.

Because part of the message I'm here to deliver on behalf of the American people is very simple: It's just to say thank you. Thank you for your extraordinary service. I thank you as your President because you inspire me. And of all the privileges I have in serving in this office, nothing comes close to the honor of serving as your Commander in Chief.

And I also thank you on behalf of more than 300 million Americans. We Americans may disagree and debate and argue sometimes. That is part of our democracy. It is messy sometimes. Sometimes, it results in some gridlock in Washington. But whether liberal or conservative, Democrat or Republican, White, Black, Brown, rich, poor, no matter how we pray, no matter who we love, when it comes to our troops, when it comes to you and your families, as Americans we stand united. We are proud of you, we support you, and we can never thank you enough.

And that's especially true now, during the holidays. We can gather with family and friends because you're willing to hug yours goodbye and step forward to serve. After a long day, we can come home because you're willing to leave your home and deploy. We get to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries and holidays, go to soccer games and go to dance recitals because you're willing to miss those of your family. We're free and safe and secure over here because you're willing to serve over there.

That's the noble spirit of your sacrifice. That's the selfless character of our military. Those are the precious gifts that you give America, not just this time of year, but all year, every year. You never stop serving. You never stop giving. You guys are like Santa in fatigues. [*Laughter*] Although, I'll bet one of those C–130s is a little more efficient than Santa's sleigh.

Audience members. Wooo!

The President. I figured I'd get something out of our guys on that. [*Laughter*]

I also wanted to be here, though, because after more than a decade of war, our Nation is marking an important milestone. Ever since our country was attacked that awful September morning, 9/11, our Nation's been at war in Afghanistan. Many people here have deployed there, or to Iraq, and you've deployed multiple times in some cases. There are people here who've lost really good friends, patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice, including 54 fallen heroes from this base, who we will honor forever.

For more than a year, Afghan forces have been in the lead to secure their country, and that means more of our troops have been coming home, including right here to this joint base. So let me just say to all of you who have returned from Afghanistan in recent weeks, on behalf of a grateful nation, I want to say welcome home. You're home for the holidays. And we're glad to have you back.

Now, this month, in just 2 weeks, the transition that we're making in Afghanistan will be complete. Afghans will take full responsibility for their security. This month, after more than 13 years, our combat mission in Afghanistan will be over. This month, America's war in Afghanistan will come to a responsible end.

Now, that doesn't mean everything's great in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's still a very dangerous place. But I want you and every American who has served in Afghanistan to be proud of what you've accomplished there. Because your generation—the 9/11 generation—has met every mission that's been given to you. You

helped decimate the core Al Qaida leadership and deliver justice to Usama bin Laden. He will not be attacking here anymore. You helped to prevent terrorist attacks against this country. You helped push back the Taliban. You helped train Afghan forces to take the lead. You helped make possible a historic election this year and the first democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's history. And despite all their challenges, Afghans are now looking to the future. And that's all because of you. That makes us safer, and it gives them a chance for a better future.

Now, even as our combat mission ends, our commitment to Afghanistan endures. We'll continue to have a limited military presence there because we've got to keep training and equipping Afghan forces, and we've got to conduct counterterrorism missions because there are still remnants of Al Qaida there. After all the sacrifices you've made, we want to preserve the gains that you've made. We want a stable and secure Afghanistan. And we want to make sure that country is never again used to launch attacks against the United States of America.

Now, this year is also a reminder that even as our combat mission ends in Afghanistan, there are still challenges to our security around the globe. In times of crisis, people around the world look to one nation to lead, and that is the United States of America. Even our critics, when they get into trouble, they're calling us. And when the world calls on America, we call on you, our men and women in uniform, because nobody can do what you can do.

One news article said it best: When our forces train here, folks who live nearby might "feel the ground shake," because no other military in the world is as good as you, as ready as you, as capable as you, able to go as far, able to go as fast as you do and perform your basic missions. Nobody. Nobody in history has been able to do what you've done.

Which means we're leading the global coalition against the brutal terrorist group ISIL in Iraq and Syria. And you are doing your part, supporting the aerial refueling that keeps our aircraft in the skies and the airlift that moves our people and equipment into place. Some folks from this base are there right now doing incredible work. And to them, and to all our troops far from home and their families for the holidays, you are in our thoughts, our prayers, and we can't wait till you come home too.

Just look at the difference that you and the rest of our military have made. Rescuing thousands of innocent Iraqi men, women, and children that were trapped up on a mountain in danger of slaughter—you saved them. Airdropping food and water and medicine, saving countless lives—America led the way. That's what we do.

Along with our coalition partners, we are hammering these terrorists, taking out their fighters, their commanders, hundreds of vehicles and tanks, nearly 200 oil and gas facilities, the infrastructure that funds their terror. More than a thousand fighting positions, checkpoints, buildings, barracks—we're taking them out. That's because of the work that you do. We're cutting their command and control and supply lines and making it harder for them to maneuver.

In Iraq, local forces have held the line in some places and pushed back ISIL in other places. In Syria, our airstrikes are inflicting heavy losses on ISIL fighters and leaders. Because of you, we have blunted their momentum, and we have put them on the defensive. And these terrorists are learning the same thing that the leaders of Al Qaida have learned the hard way: They may think that they can chalk up some quick victories, but our reach is long. We do not give up. You threaten America, you will have no safe haven. We will find you. And like petty tyrants and terrorists before you, the world is going to leave you behind and keep moving on without you, because we will get you. That's thanks to you.

Now, this campaign in Iraq will take time. But make no mistake, our coalition isn't just going to degrade this barbaric terrorist organization, we're going to destroy it. And because this isn't just a military effort, we're going to keep working with those in the Middle East who believe in tolerance and opportunity and peace, because that's what the region needs.

These terrorists only know how to destroy. And we know how to do something bigger, how to build the security and peace and justice that we can build with others. But none of that would be possible without you. That's American leadership. That's the difference you make.

In the same way that we're leading the fight against ISIL, we're leading the global fight against Ebola in West Africa. And you've been doing your part: deploying to Liberia and Senegal, improving airfields, setting up the logistics and command-and-control, building the infrastructure, manning that air bridge, airlifting food and equipment and personnel. You have been out front.

And if you doubt the impact that you're having, take a look at what's going on there. With your help, we've built new treatment centers. We're training more health care workers. We're delivering medicine and supplies. Other countries are now willing to come in because you laid the foundation. And this is still a terrible epidemic, and the world has to keep on stepping up, but in Liberia, where we focused our efforts, cases are starting to decline. Ultimately, we will have saved thousands of lives because of you.

As one of our American commanders said, "Everywhere I go, Liberians are waving; hope is what we're providing." Or what—as one West African put it, "We've always loved America, and for them to come in and help at a time like this reinforces that." That's the difference you're making. There are people who are alive today because of what you guys do. That's American leadership.

So, stepping back for a moment, we're at a turning point. When I took office, we had nearly 180,000 troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. By the end of this month, we'll have fewer than 15,000 in those two countries. We've now brought home about 90 percent of our troops—90 percent. The time of deploying large ground forces with big military footprints to engage in nation-building overseas, that's coming to an end.

And going forward, our military will be leaner. But as your Commander in Chief, I'm going to make sure we keep you ready for the range of missions that we ask of you. We are going to keep you the best trained, the best led, the best equipped military in the history of the world because the world will still be calling.

And that's why it was so important that folks in Congress—Democrats and Republicans—came together and passed legislation that I'm going to sign to keep our Government open and funded for the coming year. And that includes military operations: the support and commissaries that your families depend on, a pay raise for you, health care for our wounded warriors and our veterans. You've always been there for us; we've got to be there for you.

And let me make one other point. At this time of transition, I know some of you will be returning to civilian life. I was talking about this with the two generals that I rode over with. We want to make sure you can enjoy the American Dream that you helped to defend. So we'll keep helping you with the transition assistance and the credentialing and the licensing to help find civilian jobs worthy of your incredible talents.

We're going to keep funding the post-9/11 GI bill and keep working with colleges and universities to help you and your families realize your dream of a higher education. And as many of you know, Michelle, the First Lady, Vice President Biden's wife, Jill Biden, everybody at Joining Forces, we're all going to be saying to every company in America: If you want somebody who's going to get the job done, hire a military spouse. Hire a veteran. That's the difference you can make here at home. Because that's also American leadership: the jobs and the opportunity and the country that we can build together as one American team. You understand that. You've trained for it. And when you get in the job, that's what you deliver every single time.

So I want to leave you with a story of somebody who has a special understanding of the American spirit. I just met them before I came out here, but before I came out, Yeoman Carrie Chavez and Staff Sergeant Ashley Montgomery, they did the Pledge of Allegiance and sang our national anthem, and I had a chance

to take a picture with them out back. And I asked them where they're from, and they're from Jersey, of course. [*Laughter*] And, in fact, Ashley said that her dad had served at this facility 30 years earlier. So I asked her, had she ever left the base—[*laughter*]—and she said, yes, she had been deployed at four other bases. But that's one example of American service: a generation passing the baton to the next generation; entire families who have served our country nobly, dating back in some cases over a century.

But then, there's another part of the American story. There's another young man I met. His name is Nelson Rieu, and Nelson's here today. Wave, Nelson. There's Nelson. Now, the reason I want to tell Nelson's story is because, unlike Ashley, Nelson wasn't born here on base, he wasn't born in Jersey. He was born in the Republic of Congo. And when his country slipped into civil war, he and his mother became refugees. And that was a terrible civil war. Over a million people died in that civil war. That was a hard life. When he was 20 years old, he and his mom got some incredible news—"the best thing that's ever happened to me," he says. He had the chance to come to America.

So they land in Los Angeles, and Nelson said it was like being in a movie, all these glistening buildings and freeways. And they settled in Arizona. And Nelson barely spoke a word of English. So he took high school classes: English, American history; he earned his high school diploma. And then he signed up to serve a country that wasn't even yet fully his own. He raised his hand, took the oath, and joined the United States Air Force. And then, this past Fourth of July, he put on his uniform, he raised his hand again, and he took another oath to become a citizen of the United States. "The Fourth of July," he says, "is my new American birthday."

And today, Airman First Class Nelson Rieu is an engineering apprentice here on base, helping to keep his fellow airmen safe. And at 24 years old, he dreams of someday joining the Special Forces. And he says, "Freedom is the reason why I am in this country and [why I] wanted to be part of those who sustain that freedom. It's a great feeling to know you're the backbone of the greatest nation on Earth."

So you think about that. You've got folks whose dads were born on—or who were born on base and who served going back generations. But then, you've got new Americans with that same patriotism, that same sense of what we're about as Americans, that same creed that we can all pledge allegiance to, regardless of what we look like or where we come from. We're fighting on the same team for the same values and the same ideals.

So thank you for your patriotism, Nelson.

And that's one of the things that makes America exceptional and what makes our military the absolute best in the world. It's not just your training or your equipment or your technology, although all that's important. What makes us special, what makes us the best, is all of you. It's your character and your willingness to say, "Send me." Your dedication to duty and your courage and your readiness to defend our values and our ideals of freedom and liberty, not just for us, but for people all around the world.

You are the backbone of the greatest nation on Earth, and you will always be that. And for that, America is eternally grateful, and I am incredibly proud to serve as your Commander in Chief.

So happy holidays, everybody. God bless you. God bless your families. God bless our Armed Forces. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:49 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Frederick H. "Rick" Martin, USAF, commander, U.S. Air Force Expeditionary Center; Maj. Gen. Margaret Wynell Boor, USA, commanding general, 99th Regional Support Command; Col. James C. Hodges, USAF, commander, 87th Air Base Wing, and installation commander, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst; Andrew, Sarah, Patrick, and Bridget Christie, children of Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey; musician Bruce Springsteen; Maj. Gen. Darryl A. Williams, USA, commander, U.S. Army Af-

rica; and Mayor Sarah Z. Mendoabor of Tappita, Liberia. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; and H.R. 83.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Vivik H. Murthy as United States Surgeon General

December 15, 2014

I applaud the Senate for confirming Vivek Murthy to be our country's next Surgeon General. As "America's Doctor," Vivek will hit the ground running to make sure every American has the information they need to keep themselves and their families safe. He'll bring his lifetime of experience promoting public health to bear on priorities ranging from stopping new diseases to helping our kids grow up healthy and strong. Vivek will also help us build on the progress we've made combating Ebola, both in our country and at its source. Combined with the crucial support for fighting Ebola included in the bill to fund our Government next year, Vivek's confirmation makes us better positioned to save lives around the world and protect the American people here at home.

Statement on the Terrorist Attack at the Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan

December 16, 2014

The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms today's horrific attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan. Our hearts and prayers go out to the victims, their families, and loved ones. By targeting students and teachers in this heinous attack, terrorists have once again shown their depravity. We stand with the people of Pakistan and reiterate the commitment of the United States to support the Government of Pakistan in its efforts to combat terrorism and extremism and to promote peace and stability in the region.

Statement on the Observance of Hanukkah

December 16, 2014

Over the 8 nights of Hanukkah, Jews across America, Israel, and the world will remember an ancient triumph of freedom over oppression and renew their faith in the possibility of miracles large and small.

Even in the darkest, shortest days of winter, the Festival of Lights brims with possibility and hope. The courage of the Maccabees reminds us that we too can overcome seemingly insurmountable odds. The candles of the menorah remind us that even the smallest light has the power to shine through the darkness. And the miracle at the heart of Hanukkah—the oil that lasted for 8 nights instead of only 1—reminds us that even when the future is uncertain, our best days are yet to come.

May this Hanukkah embolden us to do what is right, shine a light on the miracles we enjoy, and kindle in all of us the desire to share those miracles with others. From my family to yours, *Chag Sameach.*

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Sarah Saldaña as Director of United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement
December 16, 2014

I applaud the Senate for confirming Sarah Saldaña as Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. With her years of experience enforcing the law, most recently as U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Texas, Sarah is the right person to lead the dedicated men and women at ICE in securing our borders, keeping American communities safe, and upholding our values. Since I took office, illegal border crossings are down, and removal of dangerous criminals is up. I'm confident Sarah will help us build on this progress while protecting our country in a smart, effective, and humane way.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Antony J. Blinken as Deputy Secretary of State
December 16, 2014

I am pleased that the Senate has confirmed Antony Blinken as our next Deputy Secretary of State. Over decades of dedicated public service, Tony has displayed extraordinary integrity, judgment, and inclusiveness as he has implemented America's foreign policy priorities. Under the leadership of Secretary Kerry and now Deputy Secretary Blinken, and thanks to the talented professionals at the State Department, I am confident in America's ability to continue to succeed abroad. I thank Tony for his friendship and sound counsel during his time at the White House, and I look forward to continuing to work with him as he represents the country he loves.

Memorandum on Withdrawal of Certain Areas of the United States Outer Continental Shelf From Leasing Disposition
December 16, 2014

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Interior

Subject: Withdrawal of Certain Areas of the United States Outer Continental Shelf from Leasing Disposition

Consistent with principles of responsible public stewardship entrusted to this office, with due consideration of the importance of Bristol Bay and the North Aleutian Basin Planning Area to subsistence use by Alaska Natives, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and sustainable commercial and recreational fisheries, and to ensure that the unique resources of Bristol Bay remain available for future generations, I hereby revoke my memorandum of March 31, 2010 (Withdrawal of Certain Areas of the United States Outer Continental Shelf from Leasing Disposition), and direct as follows:

Under the authority granted to me in section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, 43 U.S.C. 1341(a), I hereby withdraw from disposition by leasing for a time period without specific expiration the area of the Outer Continental Shelf currently designated by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management as the North Aleutian Basin Planning Area (Area), including Bristol Bay, offshore Alaska. This withdrawal prevents consideration of this Area for any oil or gas leasing for purposes of exploration, development, or production.

Nothing in this withdrawal affects the rights under existing leases in this Area.

BARACK OBAMA

Letter to Congressional Leaders Designating Funds for Overseas Contingency Operations and Global Counterterrorism
December 16, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 6 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (the "Act"), I hereby designate for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding (including the rescission of funds) and contributions from foreign governments so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Regarding Designation of Emergency Funding Under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as Amended
December 16, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 6 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (the "Act"), I hereby designate as emergency requirements all funding so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed memorandum from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Address to the Nation on United States Policy Toward Cuba
December 17, 2014

Good afternoon. Today the United States of America is changing its relationship with the people of Cuba.

In the most significant changes in our policy in more than 50 years, we will end an outdated approach that, for decades, has failed to advance our interests, and instead, we will begin to normalize relations between our two countries. Through these changes, we intend to create more opportunities for the American and Cuban people and begin a new chapter among the nations of the Americas.

There's a complicated history between the United States and Cuba. I was born in 1961, just over 2 years after Fidel Castro took power in Cuba and just a few months after the Bay of Pigs invasion, which tried to overthrow his regime. Over the next several decades, the relationship between our countries played out against the backdrop of the cold war and

America's steadfast opposition to communism. We are separated by just over 90 miles. But year after year, an ideological and economic barrier hardened between our two countries.

Meanwhile, the Cuban exile community in the United States made enormous contributions to our country: in politics and business, culture and sports. Like immigrants before, Cubans helped remake America, even as they felt a painful yearning for the land and families they left behind. All of this bound America and Cuba in a unique relationship, at once family and foe.

Proudly, the United States has supported democracy and human rights in Cuba through these five decades. We've done so primarily through policies that aimed to isolate the island, preventing the most basic travel and commerce that Americans can enjoy anyplace else. And though this policy has been rooted in the best of intentions, no other nation joins us in imposing these sanctions, and it has had little effect beyond providing the Cuban Government with a rationale for restrictions on its people. Today, Cuba is still governed by the Castros and the Communist Party that came to power half a century ago.

Neither the American nor Cuban people are well served by a rigid policy that's rooted in events that took place before most of us were born. Consider that for more than 35 years, we've had relations with China, a far larger country also governed by a Communist Party. Nearly two decades ago, we reestablished relations with Vietnam, where we fought a war that claimed more Americans than any cold war confrontation.

That's why, when I came into office, I promised to reexamine our Cuba policy. As a start, we lifted restrictions for Cuban Americans to travel and send remittances to their families in Cuba. These changes, once controversial, now seem obvious. Cuban Americans have been reunited with their families and are the best possible ambassadors for our values. And through these exchanges, a younger generation of Cuban Americans has increasingly questioned an approach that does more to keep Cuba closed off from an interconnected world.

While I've been prepared to take additional steps for some time, a major obstacle stood in our way: the wrongful imprisonment, in Cuba, of a U.S. citizen and USAID subcontractor, Alan Gross, for 5 years. Over many months, my administration has held discussions with the Cuban Government about Alan's case and other aspects of our relationship. His Holiness Pope Francis issued a personal appeal to me, and to Cuba's President Raul Castro, urging us to resolve Alan's case and to address Cuba's interest in the release of three Cuban agents who've been jailed in the United States for over 15 years.

Today Alan returned home, reunited with his family at long last. Alan was released by the Cuban Government on humanitarian grounds. Separately, in exchange for the three Cuban agents, Cuba today released one of the most important intelligence agents that the United States has ever had in Cuba, and who has been imprisoned for nearly two decades. This man, whose sacrifice has been known to only a few, provided America with the information that allowed us to arrest the network of Cuban agents that included the men transferred to Cuba today, as well as other spies in the United States. This man is now safely on our shores.

Having recovered these two men who sacrificed for our country, I'm now taking steps to place the interests of the people of both countries at the heart of our policy.

First, I've instructed Secretary Kerry to immediately begin discussions with Cuba to reestablish diplomatic relations that have been severed since January of 1961. Going forward, the United States will reestablish an Embassy in Havana, and high-ranking officials will visit Cuba.

Where we can advance shared interests, we will: on issues like health, migration, counterterrorism, drug trafficking, and disaster response. Indeed, we've seen the benefits of cooperation between our countries before. It was a Cuban, Carlos Finlay, who discovered that mosquitoes carry yellow fever; his work helped Walter Reed fight it. Cuba has sent hundreds of health care workers to Africa to fight Ebola, and I believe American and Cuban health care

workers should work side by side to stop the spread of this deadly disease.

Now, where we disagree, we will raise those differences directly, as we will continue to do on issues related to democracy and human rights in Cuba. But I believe that we can do more to support the Cuban people and promote our values through engagement. After all, these 50 years have shown that isolation has not worked. It's time for a new approach.

Second, I've instructed Secretary Kerry to review Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism. This review will be guided by the facts and the law. Terrorism has changed in the last several decades. At a time when we are focused on threats from Al Qaida to ISIL, a nation that meets our conditions and renounces the use of terrorism should not face this sanction.

Third, we are taking steps to increase travel, commerce, and the flow of information to and from Cuba. This is fundamentally about freedom and openness and also expresses my belief in the power of people-to-people engagement. With the changes I'm announcing today, it will be easier for Americans to travel to Cuba, and Americans will be able to use American credit and debit cards on the island. Nobody represents America's values better than the American people, and I believe this contact will ultimately do more to empower the Cuban people.

I also believe that more resources should be able to reach the Cuban people. So we're significantly increasing the amount of money that can be sent to Cuba and removing limits on remittances that support humanitarian projects, the Cuban people, and the emerging Cuban private sector.

I believe that American businesses should not be put at a disadvantage and that increased commerce is good for Americans and for Cubans. So we will facilitate authorized transactions between the United States and Cuba. U.S. financial institutions will be allowed to open accounts at Cuban financial institutions. And it will be easier for U.S. exporters to sell goods in Cuba.

I believe in the free flow of information. Unfortunately, our sanctions on Cuba have denied Cubans access to technology that has empowered individuals around the globe. So I've authorized increased telecommunications connections between the United States and Cuba. Businesses will be able to sell goods that enable Cubans to communicate with the United States and other countries.

These are the steps that I can take as President to change this policy. The embargo that's been imposed for decades is now codified in legislation. As these changes unfold, I look forward to engaging Congress in an honest and serious debate about lifting the embargo.

Yesterday I spoke with Raul Castro to finalize Alan Gross's release and the exchange of prisoners and to describe how we will move forward. I made clear my strong belief that Cuban society is constrained by restrictions on its citizens. In addition to the return of Alan Gross and the release of our intelligence agent, we welcome Cuba's decision to release a substantial number of prisoners whose cases were directly raised with the Cuban Government by my team. We welcome Cuba's decision to provide more access to the Internet for its citizens and to continue increasing engagement with international institutions like the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross that promote universal values.

But I'm under no illusion about the continued barriers to freedom that remain for ordinary Cubans. The United States believes that no Cuban should face harassment or arrest or beatings simply because they're exercising a universal right to have their voices heard, and we will continue to support civil society there. While Cuba has made reforms to gradually open up its economy, we continue to believe that Cuban workers should be free to form unions, just as their citizens should be free to participate in the political process.

Moreover, given Cuba's history, I expect it will continue to pursue foreign policies that will at times be sharply at odds with American interests. I do not expect the changes I'm announcing today to bring about a transformation of Cuban society overnight. But I am con-

vinced that through a policy of engagement, we can more effectively stand up for our values and help the Cuban people help themselves as they move into the 21st century.

To those who oppose the steps I'm announcing today, let me say that I respect your passion and share your commitment to liberty and democracy. The question is how we uphold that commitment. I do not believe we can keep doing the same thing for over five decades and expect a different result. Moreover, it does not serve America's interests or the Cuban people to try to push Cuba towards collapse. Even if that worked—and it hasn't for 50 years—we know from hard-earned experience that countries are more likely to enjoy lasting transformation if their people are not subjected to chaos. We are calling on Cuba to unleash the potential of 11 million Cubans by ending unnecessary restrictions on their political, social, and economic activities. In that spirit, we should not allow U.S. sanctions to add to the burden of Cuban citizens that we seek to help.

To the Cuban people, America extends a hand of friendship. Some of you have looked to us as a source of hope, and we will continue to shine a light of freedom. Others have seen us as a former colonizer intent on controlling your future. José Martí once said, "Liberty is the right of every man to be honest." Today I'm being honest with you. We can never erase the history between us, but we believe that you should be empowered to live with dignity and self-determination. Cubans have a saying about daily life: *"No es facil"*—it's not easy. Today the United States wants to be a partner in making the lives of ordinary Cubans a little bit easier, more free, more prosperous.

To those who have supported these measures, I thank you for being partners in our efforts. In particular, I want to thank His Holiness Pope Francis, whose moral example shows us the importance of pursuing the world as it should be, rather than simply settling for the world as it is; the Government of Canada, which hosted our discussions with the Cuban Government; and a bipartisan group of Congressmen who've worked tirelessly for Alan Gross's release and for a new approach to advancing our interests and values in Cuba.

Finally, our shift in policy towards Cuba comes at a moment of renewed leadership in the Americas. This April, we are prepared to have Cuba join the other nations of the hemisphere at the Summit of the Americas. But we will insist that civil society join us so that citizens, not just leaders, are shaping our future. And I call on all of my fellow leaders to give meaning to the commitment to democracy and human rights at the heart of the Inter-American Charter. Let us leave behind the legacy of both colonization and communism, the tyranny of drug cartels, dictators, and sham elections. A future of greater peace, security, and democratic development is possible if we work together, not to maintain power, not to secure vested interests, but instead to advance the dreams of our citizens.

My fellow Americans, the city of Miami is only 200 miles or so from Havana. Countless thousands of Cubans have come to Miami, on planes and makeshift rafts, some with little but the shirt on their back and hope in their hearts. Today, Miami is often referred to as the capital of Latin America. But it is also a profoundly American city, a place that reminds us that ideals matter more than the color of our skin or the circumstances of our birth, a demonstration of what the Cuban people can achieve and the openness of the United States to our family to the South. *Todos somos Americanos.*

Change is hard, in our own lives and in the lives of nations. And change is even harder when we carry the heavy weight of history on our shoulders. But today we are making these changes because it is the right thing to do. Today America chooses to cut loose the shackles of the past so as to reach for a better future, for the Cuban people, for the American people, for our entire hemisphere, and for the world.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba; and Gerardo

Hernández, Ramón Labañino (Luis Medina), and Antonio Guerrero, the remaining members of the original "Cuban Five" who were released from U.S. custody in exchange for the return of Rolando Sarraf Trujillo, a Cuban-born Central Intelligence Agency and Federal Bureau of Investigation intelligence asset detained in Cuba. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks at a Hanukkah Reception
December 17, 2014

Audience member. Happy Hanukkah, Mr. President!

The President. Well, Happy Hanukkah to you! [*Laughter*] You stole my line. [*Laughter*] Happy Hanukkah, everybody.

Audience members. Happy Hannukah.

The President. Welcome to the White House. I want to welcome the Members of Congress who are here today. We've got some Bronfman Fellows, here from the—[*applause*]—who are here from the State of Israel. Obviously, the bonds between our two countries are unbreakable, and with the help of young people, they're only going to grow stronger in the years to come.

Every year, Michelle and I like to invite just a few friends over for a little Hanukkah celebration—[*laughter*]—nothing fancy. Actually, this is the second year we've invited so many friends that we're hosting two parties instead of one. This is our first party. It is the best party. [*Laughter*] Don't tell the others though.

I want to begin with today's wonderful news. I'm told that in the Jewish tradition, one of the great mitzvahs is *pidyon shvuyim*. [*Applause*] No, no—my Hebrew is not perfect, but I get points for trying. But it describes the redemption, the freeing of captives. And that's what we're celebrating today, because after being unjustly held in Cuba for more than 5 years, American Alan Gross is free.

Alan has dedicated his life to others, to helping people around the world develop their communities and improve their lives, including Israelis and Palestinians. He's a man of deep faith who once worked for the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. Five years ago, he was arrested by Cuban authorities simply for helping ordinary Cubans, including Cuba's small Jewish community, access information on the Internet. And ever since, those who have loved and cared for Alan never stopped working to bring him home: Judy, his wife of 44 years, and their daughters, including his oldest daughter, who walked down the aisle without her dad on her wedding day; his mother, who passed away this year without being able to see her son one last time; his whole family, including his sister-in-law Gwen Zuares, who joins us here today—where is Gwen? Hey, Gwen—his rabbi, his friends at his congregation in Maryland, Am Kolel, who kept him in their prayers every Shabbat; Jewish and other faith leaders across the country and around the world, including His Holiness Pope Francis; and Members of Congress and those of us in the United States Government.

And Alan's fought back. He spoke out from his cell, he went on a hunger strike. With his health deteriorating, his family worried he might not be able to make it out alive. But he never gave up, and we never gave up.

As I explained earlier, after our many months of discussion with the Cuban Government, Alan was finally released this morning on humanitarian grounds. I spoke to him on his flight. He said he was willing to interrupt his corned beef sandwich to talk to me. [*Laughter*] I told him he had mustard in his mustache; I couldn't actually see it. [*Laughter*] But needless to say, he was thrilled. And he landed at Andrews in a plane marked "The United States of America."

He's going to be getting the medical attention that he needs. He's back where he belongs: in America, with his family, home for Hanukkah. And I can't think of a better way to mark this holiday, with its message that freedom is possible, than with the historic changes that I announced today in our Cuba policy,

which are—[*applause*]. Now, these are changes that are rooted in America's commitment to freedom and democracy for all the Cuban people, including its small, but proud, Jewish community. And Alan's remarks about the need for these changes was extremely powerful.

So what brings us together is not just lox and latkes—[*laughter*]—although, I have heard the latkes here are outstanding. Am I wrong? Not as good as your mom's, but they're good.

We're here to celebrate a story that took place more than 2,000 years ago, when a small group of Maccabees rose up to defeat their far more powerful oppressors. In the face of overwhelming odds, they reclaimed their city and the right to worship as they chose. And in their victory, they found there wasn't enough oil to keep the flame in their temple alive. But they lit the oil they had, and miraculously, the flame that was supposed to burn for just 1 night burned for 8. The Hanukkah story teaches us that our light can shine brighter than we could ever imagine with faith, and it's up to us to provide that first spark.

This is something that Inbar Vardi and Mouran Ibrahim know very well. They are Israeli ninth-graders at Hand in Hand, which is a bilingual school in Jerusalem. For more than a decade, it's brought Jewish and Arab children together. So Inbar is Jewish; Mouran is Muslim.

Just 2 weeks ago, their school's first-grade classroom was set on fire by arsonists. In the weeks that followed, they and their classmates could have succumbed to anger or cynicism, but instead, they built this menorah, one of four that we brought here from Israel this year. Each of its branches are dedicated to one of the values their school is founded on, values like community and dignity and equality and peace. Inbar and Mouran flew here from Israel along with Rebecca Bardach, the mother of the—of a first-grader and second-grader at Hand in Hand, and in just a few minutes the three of them are going to join us in lighting the Hanukkah candles here at the White House.

So Inbar and Mouran and their fellow students teach us a critical lesson for this time in our history: The light of hope must outlast the fires of hate. That's what the Hanukkah story teaches us. That's what our young people can teach us: that one act of faith can make a miracle, that love is stronger than hate, that peace can triumph over conflict. And during this Festival of Lights, let's commit ourselves to making some small miracles ourselves and then sharing them with the world.

Audience members. Amen!

I now want to invite Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson to the podium, who can lead us in the blessings for the candle lighting. Rabbi.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:27 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Shira and Nina Gross, daughters of former U.S. Agency for International Development contractor Alan P. Gross; David Shneyer, founder and director, Am Kolel Jewish Renewal Community of Greater Washington; Rebecca Bardach, director of resource development and strategy, Hand in Hand Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel, and her sons Adin and Amitai Goldstein; and Bradley S. Artson, the Abner and Roslyn Goldstine Dean's Chair at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, American Jewish University.

Statement on the Resignation of Rajiv J. Shah as Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development

December 17, 2014

For the past 5 years, Raj Shah has been at the center of my administration's efforts to advance our global development agenda as the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). To be sure, his tasks have never been easy: responding to natural disasters, epidemics, and famine, to name just a few examples. But Raj, the

son of proud Indian immigrants, has embodied America's finest values by proactively advancing our development priorities, including ending global poverty, championing food security, promoting health and nutrition, expanding access to energy sources, and supporting political and economic reform in closed societies.

Raj's leadership and counsel will be missed, but I join his USAID colleagues and administration counterparts in wishing him well as he embarks on a new chapter.

Remarks at a Hanukkah Reception
December 17, 2014

The President. Yay! Hello, everybody!

Audience members. Hello!

The President. Happy Hanukkah!

Audience members. Happy Hanukkah!

The President. This is a particularly good-looking Hanukkah crowd.

The First Lady. It's good. [*Laughter*] It's good.

The President. It's very impressive.

Now, every year, Michelle and I like to invite just a few friends over for a small Hanukkah celebration. [*Laughter*] Nothing fancy. This is the second year we've invited so many friends that we ended up having to have two Hanukkah parties. We had one earlier this afternoon. I have to tell you, this is the better party. Don't tell anybody because——

The First Lady. Because he said that earlier.

The President. I said that earlier. [*Laughter*] But I really mean it this time.

The First Lady. Okay.

The President. Yes. We are blessed to have so many friends and dignitaries here. I want to welcome Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer, who's here, and his wife Rhoda; all our friends from the State of Israel, who remind us that the bonds between our two countries are unbreakable.

We have leaders from across my administration, including our outstanding Secretary of the Treasury, Jack Lew; Council of Economic Advisers Chair Jason Furman.

The First Lady. Yay, Jason! Jason!

The President. Give Jason some more—Jason actually is the guy who gives me the job reports every month. Ever since he's come on, they've been really good. So give Jason a big round of applause.

National Economic Council Director Jeff Zients is here. We've got the Governor of Maryland, Martin O'Malley. We've got all kinds of Members of Congress here, including our DNC Chair, Debbie Wasserman Schultz; the president of the Anti-Defamation League, Abe Foxman; and a member of my team who's leaving to become ADL's next president, Jonathan Greenblatt.

Now, I'm going to begin by saying what a glorious day this is because, after 5 years, American Alan Gross is free. As all of you know, he was arrested 5 years ago by Cuban authorities simply for helping ordinary Cubans—including a small Jewish community in Cuba—just for accessing information on the Internet. Today, after 1,840 days, he is back where he belongs, with his wife Judy and his family. And as you heard Alan say today, this is his best Hanukkah.

From his cell, Alan once wrote, "I refuse to accept that my country would leave me behind." And he is right. We're committed to the principle that no American ever gets left behind. We do everything in our power to bring Americans home. So we thank all those who helped to make sure that Alan was never forgotten. And as now we're moving forward, we know that the historic changes I announced today will mean greater opportunity and progress for both Americans and for Cubans, including the small, but proud, Jewish community in Cuba.

So we are here to celebrate a story that took place more than 2,000 years ago, when a small group of Maccabees rose up to defeat their far more powerful oppressors. In the face of—what do we got playing there? [*Laughter*] What you got on your phone? I was trying to figure out the ringtone. [*Laughter*]

Where was I? Small group of Maccabees—right! Rose up to defeat their far more power-

ful oppressors. In the face of overwhelming odds, they reclaimed their city and the right to worship as they choose.

And after their victory, the Maccabees found there wasn't enough oil to keep the flame in their temple alive. But they lit the oil that they had. And miraculously, the flame that was supposed to burn for just 1 night burned for 8. The Hanukkah story teaches us that our light can shine brighter than even we could imagine, with a little bit of faith and making sure that it's up to us to provide that first spark.

The menorahs that we're about to light remind us of our power to make miracles happen. It was one of four that were brought here from Israel, and was built by children in Yemin Orde, a village in Israel founded in 1953 to provide a safe haven to orphans and young immigrants after the Holocaust. More than 60 years later, Yemin Orde still gives children in Israel a shot at a brighter future. And tonight Atakalit Tesfaye, a graduate of Yemin Orde, will help us light the Hanukkah candles.

He will be joined by Dr. Adam Levine. Now, I just want to be clear, this is not—[*laughter*]—Adam Levine, People's magazine's Sexiest Man Alive—[*laughter*]—although he's a pretty sexy guy. [*Laughter*] This is actually Dr. Adam Levine, Time's Person of the Year. Along with his compatriots, Adam, who recently returned from Liberia, has been doing heroic work for Ebola patients, saving lives.

Yemin Orde is just one village. But the story of Hanukkah teaches us that there's no such thing as a futile act of courage or a small act of faith. One doctor can save a life. One school can help a child. That life, that child, may change a village. One person can be the spark that changes the world.

So, as we gather with family and friends, let's give thanks to the miracles that we've been blessed with in our own lives, miracles large and small—same ringtone. [*Laughter*] And during this Festival of Lights, let's commit ourselves to making new miracles and to sharing them with the world.

I'd now like to invite Rabbi Angela Buchdahl, from Manhattan, to lead us in the blessing and candle lighting. Rabbi.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:03 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jonathan A. Greenblatt, Director, White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation; former U.S. Agency for International Development contractor Alan P. Gross; Adam C. Levine, assistant professor of emergency medicine, Brown University; musician Adam Levine; and Angela Warnick Buchdahl, senior rabbi, Central Synagogue in New York City.

Statement on Signing the Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014
December 18, 2014

Today I have signed H.R. 5859, the Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014, into law. Signing this legislation does not signal a change in the administration's sanctions policy, which we have carefully calibrated in accordance with developments on the ground and coordinated with our allies and partners. At this time, the administration does not intend to impose sanctions under this law, but the Act gives the administration additional authorities that could be utilized if circumstances warranted.

My administration will continue to work closely with allies and partners in Europe and internationally to respond to developments in Ukraine and will continue to review and calibrate our sanctions to respond to Russia's actions. We again call on Russia to end its occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea, cease support to separatists in eastern Ukraine, and implement the obligations it signed up to under the Minsk agreements.

As I have said many times, our goal is to promote a diplomatic solution that provides a lasting resolution to the conflict and helps to promote growth and stability in Ukraine and regionally, including in Russia. In this context, we continue to call on Russia's

leadership to implement the Minsk agreements and to reach a lasting and comprehensive resolution to the conflict which respects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We remain prepared to roll back sanctions should Russia take the necessary steps.

NOTE: H.R. 5859, approved December 18, was assigned Public Law No. 113–272.

Statement on the Appointment of Avril D. Haines as Deputy National Security Adviser
December 18, 2014

Today I have the pleasure of naming Avril Haines as my Deputy National Security Advisor. Avril has been a key member of my national security team since early in the administration, including in her previous role as the National Security Council's Legal Adviser and in her current capacity as Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. A model public servant, Avril is respected across the Government for her intelligence, work ethic, and humility, which she has displayed in positions spanning the three branches of Government. I have the utmost trust and confidence in Avril, and I know she will continue to play a critical role in my administration's efforts to keep our Nation secure and promote American interests and values around the world.

Just as we welcome Avril, I again wish to thank and commend Antony Blinken, whom the Senate confirmed on Tuesday as Deputy Secretary of State. I look forward to continuing to work with Tony in his new capacity, and I am confident that Avril will fill his shoes expertly.

The President's News Conference
December 19, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. We've really got a full house today, huh? Well, all I want for Christmas is to take your questions. [*Laughter*] But first let me say a little bit about this year.

In last year's final press conference, I said that 2014 would be a year of action and would be a breakthrough year for America. And it has been. Yes, there were crises that we had to tackle around the world, many that were unanticipated. We have more work to do to make sure our economy, our justice system, and our Government work not just for the few, but for the many. But there is no doubt that we can enter into the new year with renewed confidence that America is making significant strides where it counts.

The steps that we took early on to rescue our economy and rebuild it on a new foundation helped make 2014 the strongest year for job growth since the 1990s. All told, over a 57-month streak, our businesses have created nearly 11 million new jobs. Almost all the job growth that we've seen have been in full-time positions. Much of the recent pickup in job growth has been in higher paying industries. And in a hopeful sign for middle class families, wages are on the rise again.

Our investments in American manufacturing have helped fuel its best stretch of job growth also since the 1990s. America is now the number-one producer of oil, the number-one producer of natural gas. We're saving drivers about 70 cents a gallon at the pump over last Christmas. And effectively, today, our rescue of the auto industry is officially over. We've now repaid taxpayers every dime and more of what my administration committed, and the American auto industry is on track for its strongest year since 2005. And we've created about half a million new jobs in the auto industry alone.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, about 10 million Americans have gained health insur-

ance just this past year. Enrollment is beginning to pick up again during the open enrollment period. The uninsured rate is at a near-record low. Since the law passed, the price of health care has risen at its slowest rate in about 50 years. And we've cut our deficits by about two-thirds since I took office, bringing them to below their 40-year average.

Meanwhile, around the world, America is leading. We're leading the coalition to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL, a coalition that includes Arab partners. We're leading the international community to check Russian aggression in Ukraine. We are leading the global fight to combat Ebola in West Africa, and we are preventing an outbreak from taking place here at home. We're leading efforts to address climate change, including last month's joint announcement with China that's already jump-starting new progress in other countries. We're writing a new chapter in our leadership here in the Americas by turning a new page on our relationship with the Cuban people.

And in less than 2 weeks, after more than 13 years, our combat mission in Afghanistan will be over. Today, more of our troops are home for the holidays than any time in over a decade. Still, many of our men and women in uniform will spend Christmas in harm's way. And they should know that the country is united in support of you and grateful not only to you, but also to your families.

The 6 years since the crisis have demanded hard work and sacrifice on everybody's part. But as a country, we have every right to be proud of what we've accomplished: more jobs, more people insured, a growing economy, shrinking deficits, bustling industry, booming energy. Pick any metric that you want: America's resurgence is real. We are better off.

I've always said that recovering from the crisis of 2008 was our first order of business, and on that business, America has outperformed all of our other competitors. Over the past 4 years, we've put more people back to work than all other advanced economies combined. We've now come to a point where we have the chance to reverse an even deeper problem, the decades-long erosion of middle class jobs and incomes, and to make sure that the middle class is the engine that powers our prosperity for decades to come.

But to do that, we're going to have to make some smart choices; we've got to make the right choices. We're going to have to invest in the things that secure even faster growth in higher paying jobs for more Americans. And I'm being absolutely sincere when I say I want to work with this new Congress to get things done, to make those investments, to make sure the Government is working better and smarter. We're going to disagree on some things, but there are going to be areas of agreement, and we've got to be able to make that happen. And that's going to involve compromise every once in a while, and we saw during this lame duck period that perhaps that spirit of compromise may be coming to the fore.

In terms of my own job, I'm energized, I'm excited about the prospects for the next couple of years, and I'm certainly not going to be stopping for a minute in the effort to make life better for ordinary Americans. Because, thanks to their efforts, we really do have a new foundation that's been laid. We are better positioned than we have been in a very long time. A new future is ready to be written. We've set the stage for this American moment. And I'm going to spend every minute of my last 2 years making sure that we seize it.

My Presidency is entering the fourth quarter; interesting stuff happens in the fourth quarter. [*Laughter*] And I'm looking forward to it. But going into the fourth quarter, you usually get a timeout. I'm now looking forward to a quiet timeout: Christmas with my family. So I want to wish everybody a merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah, a happy New Year. I hope that all of you get some time to spend with your families as well, because one thing that we share is that we're away too much from them.

And now, Josh has given me the "who's been naughty and who's been nice" list—[*laughter*]—and I'm going to use it to take some questions. And we're going to start with Carrie Budoff Brown of Politico. There you go, Carrie.

Cyber Attack Against Sony Corporation by North Korea/Cybersecurity/New Politico Publication in Brussels, Belgium

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'll start on North Korea because that seems to be the biggest topic today. What does a proportional response look like to the Sony hack? And did Sony make the right decision in pulling the movie? Or does that set a dangerous precedent when faced with this kind of situation?

The President. Well, let me address the second question first. Sony is a corporation. It suffered significant damage. There were threats against its employees. I am sympathetic to the concerns that they faced. Having said all that, yes, I think they made a mistake.

In this interconnected, digital world, there are going to be opportunities for hackers to engage in cyber assaults both in the private sector and the public sector. Now, our first order of business is making sure that we do everything to harden sites and prevent those kinds of attacks from taking place. When I came into office, I stood up a cybersecurity interagency team to look at everything that we could do at the Government level to prevent these kinds of attacks. We've been coordinating with the private sector, but a lot more needs to be done. We're not even close to where we need to be.

And one of the things in the new year that I hope Congress is prepared to work with us on is strong cybersecurity laws that allow for information sharing across private sector platforms, as well as the public sector, so that we are incorporating best practices and preventing these attacks from happening in the first place.

But even as we get better, the hackers are going to get better too. Some of them are going to be state actors; some of them are going to be nonstate actors. All of them are going to be sophisticated, and many of them can do some damage.

We cannot have a society in which some dictator someplace can start imposing censorship here in the United States. Because if somebody is able to intimidate folks out of releasing a satirical movie, imagine what they start doing when they see a documentary that they don't like or news reports that they don't like. Or even worse, imagine if producers and distributors and others start engaging in self-censorship because they don't want to offend the sensibilities of somebody whose sensibilities probably need to be offended.

So that's not who we are. That's not what America is about.

Again, I'm sympathetic that Sony as a private company was worried about liabilities and this and that and the other. I wish they had spoken to me first. I would have told them, do not get into a pattern in which you're intimidated by these kinds of criminal attacks. Imagine if, instead of it being a cyber threat, somebody had broken into their offices and destroyed a bunch of computers and stolen disks and—is that what it takes for suddenly you to pull the plug on something?

And so we'll engage with not just the film industry, but the news industry and the private sector around these issues. We already have. We will continue to do so. But I think all of us have to anticipate occasionally there are going to be breaches like this. They're going to be costly. They're going to be serious. We take them with the utmost seriousness. But we can't start changing our patterns of behavior any more than we stop going to a football game because there might be the possibility of a terrorist attack, any more than Boston didn't run its marathon this year because of the possibility that somebody might try to cause harm. So let's not get into that way of doing business.

Q. Can you just say what the response would be to this attack? And also, would you consider taking some sort of symbolic step like watching the movie yourself or doing some sort of screening here that——

The President. I've got a long list of movies I'm going to be watching. [*Laughter*]

Q. Will this be one of them?

The President. I never release my full movie list.

But let's talk of the specifics of what we now know. The FBI announced today and we can confirm that North Korea engaged in this attack. I think it says something interesting about North Korea that they decided to have the

state mount an all-out assault on a movie studio because of a satirical movie starring Seth Rogen and James Flacco [Franco].* [*Laughter*] I love Seth, and I love James, but the notion that that was a threat to them, I think, gives you some sense of the kind of regime we're talking about here.

They caused a lot of damage, and we will respond. We will respond proportionally, and we'll respond in a place and time and manner that we choose. It's not something that I will announce here today at a press conference.

More broadly, though, this points to the need for us to work with the international community to start setting up some very clear rules of the road in terms of how the Internet and cyber operates. Right now it's sort of the Wild West. And part of the problem is, is you've got weak states that can engage in these kinds of attacks, you've got nonstate actors that can do enormous damage. That's part of what makes this issue of cybersecurity so urgent.

Again, this is part of the reason why it's going to be so important for Congress to work with us and get a actual bill passed that allows for the kind of information sharing we need. Because if we don't put in place the kind of architecture that can prevent these attacks from taking place, this is not just going to be affecting movies, this is going to be affecting our entire economy in ways that are extraordinarily significant.

And by the way, I hear you're moving to Europe. [*Laughter*] Where you going to be?

Q. Brussels.

The President. Brussels.

Q. Yes. Helping Politico start a new publication.

The President. Excellent. Well, congratulations.

Q. But I've been covering you since the beginning, so——

The President. Well, I think——

Q. It's been a long road for the both of us.

The President. I think there's no doubt that what Belgium needs is a version of Politico. [*Laughter*]

Q. We'll take that as an endorsement.

The President. Yes, the waffles are delicious there, by the way.

The—Cheryl Bolen [Bloomberg BNA]. You've been naughty. [*Laughter*] Cheryl, go ahead. Go ahead.

Tax Reform/Infrastructure

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Looking ahead to your work with Congress next year, you've mentioned, as an area of possible compromise, tax reform. And so I am wondering, do you see a Republican Congress as presenting a better opportunity for actually getting tax reform next year? Will you be putting out a new proposal? Are you willing to consider both individual and corporate side of the tax ledger there? And also, are you still concerned about corporate inversions?

The President. I think an all-Democratic Congress would have provided an even better opportunity for tax reform. But I think, talking to Speaker Boehner and Leader McConnell, that they are serious about wanting to get some things done. The tax area is one area where we can get things done. And I think in the coming weeks leading up to the State of Union, there will be some conversations at the staff levels about what principles each side are looking at.

I can tell you broadly what I'd like to see. I'd like to see more simplicity in the system. I'd like to see more fairness in the system. With respect to the corporate tax reform issue, we know that there are companies that are paying the full freight—35 percent—higher than just about any other company on Earth, if you're paying 35 percent. And then, there are other companies that are paying zero because they've got better accountants or lawyers. That's not fair.

There are companies that are parking money outside the country because of tax avoidance. We think that it's important that everybody pays something if in fact they are effectively headquartered in the United States. In terms of corporate inversion, those are

* White House correction.

situations where companies really are headquartered here, but, on paper, switch their headquarters to see if they can avoid paying their fair share of taxes. I think that needs to be fixed.

So fairness, everybody paying their fair share, everybody taking responsibility, I think, is going to be very important.

Some of those principles I've heard Republicans say they share. How we do that? The devil is in the details. And I'll be interested in seeing what they want to move forward. I'm going to make sure that we put forward some pretty specific proposals building on what we've already put forward.

One other element of this that I think is important is—and I've been on this hobby horse now for 6 years——

[*At this point, an audience member sneezed.*]

The President. ——bless you—we've got a lot of infrastructure we've got to rebuild in this country if we're going to be competitive: roads, bridges, ports, airports, electrical grids, water systems, sewage systems. We are way behind.

And early on, we indicated that there is a way of us potentially doing corporate tax reform, lowering rates, eliminating loopholes so everybody is paying their fair share, and during that transition, also providing a mechanism where we can get some infrastructure built. I'd like to see us work on that issue as well. Historically, obviously, infrastructure has not been a Democratic or a Republican issue, and I'd like to see if we can return to that tradition. Okay?

Julie Pace [Associated Press].

Cyber Attack Against Sony Corporation by North Korea/U.S. Policy Toward Cuba

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to ask about Cuba. What would you say to dissidents or democracy advocates inside Cuba who fear that the policy changes you announced this week could give the Castro regime economic benefits without having to address human rights or their political system? When your administration was lifting sanctions on Myanmar, you sought commitments of reform. Why not do the same with Cuba?

And if I could just follow up on North Korea: Do you have any indication that North Korea was acting in conjunction with another country, perhaps China?

The President. We've got no indication that North Korea was acting in conjunction with another country.

With respect to Cuba, we are glad that the Cuban Government has released slightly over 50 dissidents, that they are going to be allowing the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations human rights agencies to operate more freely inside of Cuba and monitor what is taking place.

I share the concerns of dissidents there and human rights activists that this is still a regime that represses its people. And as I said when I made the announcement, I don't anticipate overnight changes, but what I know deep in my bones is that if you've done the same thing for 50 years and nothing has changed, you should try something different if you want a different outcome.

And this gives us an opportunity for a different outcome, because suddenly, Cuba is open to the world in ways that it has not been before. It's open to Americans traveling there in ways that it hasn't been before. It's open to church groups visiting their fellow believers inside of Cuba in ways they haven't been before. It offers the prospect of telecommunications and the Internet being more widely available in Cuba in ways that it hasn't been before.

And over time, that chips away at this hermetically sealed society and I believe offers the best prospect then of leading to greater freedom, greater self-determination on the part of the Cuban people.

I think it will happen in fits and starts. But through engagement, we have a better chance of bringing about change then we would have otherwise. Okay?

Q. Do you have a goal for where you see Cuba being at the end of your Presidency?

The President. I think it would be unrealistic for me to map out exactly where Cuba will be. But change is going to come to Cuba. It has to.

They've got an economy that doesn't work. They've been reliant for years first on subsidies from the Soviet Union, then on subsidies from Venezuela. Those can't be sustained. And the more the Cuban people see what's possible, the more interested they are going to be in change.

But how societies change is country specific, it's culturally specific. It could happen fast; it could happen slower than I'd like. But it's going to happen. And I think this change in policy is going to advance that.

Lesley Clark [McClatchy Newspapers].

U.S. Policy Toward Cuba/Former President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba/President Obama's Telephone Conversation With President Raul Castro Ruz of Cuba/Congressional Action on U.S. Trade Embargo Against Cuba

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I had a number of questions on Cuba as well.

The President. Okay.

Q. Appreciate that. I wanted to——

The President. Do I have to write all these down? How many are there? [*Laughter*] "A number" sounded intimidating.

Q. As quick as I can. As quick as I can.

The President. Okay.

Q. I wanted to see if you got any assurances from the Cuban Government that it would not revert to the same sort of—sabotage the deal, as it has in the past when past Presidents had made similar overtures to the Government.

The President. Meaning? Be specific. What do you mean?

Q. When the Clinton administration made some overtures, they've shot down planes. They've sort of had this pattern of doing provocative events.

The President. Okay, so just general provocative activity.

Q. Provocative activities any time the U.S. has sort of reached out a hand to them. I wanted to see what is your knowledge of whether Fidel Castro—did he play—did he have any role in the talks? Did you talk—when you talked to President Castro—Raul Castro, did Fidel Castro's name come up? Or did you ask about him? How's he doing? People haven't seen him in a while. [*Laughter*] Given the deep opposition from some Republicans in Congress to lifting the embargo, to an Embassy, to any of the changes that you're doing, are you going to personally get involved in terms of talking to them about efforts that they want to do to block money on a new Embassy?

The President. All right, Lesley, I think I'm going to cut you off here. [*Laughter*] This is taking up a lot of time.

Q. Okay, all right. But now——

The President. All right. So, with respect to sabotage, I mean, my understanding of the history, for example, of the plane being shot down, it's not clear that that was the Cuban Government purposely trying to undermine overtures by the Clinton administration. It was a tragic circumstance that ended up collapsing talks that had begun to take place. I haven't seen a historical record that suggests that they shot the plane down specifically in order to undermine overtures by the Clinton Government.

I think the—it is not precedented for the President of the United States and the President of Cuba to make an announcement at the same time that they are moving towards normalizing relations. And so there hasn't been anything like this in the past. That doesn't mean that over the next 2 years we can't anticipate them taking certain actions that we may end up finding deeply troubling, either inside of Cuba or with respect to their foreign policy. And that could put significant strains on the relationship. But that's true of a lot of countries out there where we have an Embassy. And the whole point of normalizing relations is that it gives us a greater opportunity to have influence with that Government than not.

So I would be surprised if the Cuban Government purposely tries to undermine what is now effectively its own policy. I wouldn't be surprised if they take at any given time actions that we think are a problem. And we will be in a position to respond to whatever actions they take the same way we do with a whole range of countries around the world when they do things we think are wrong. But the point is, is that we will be in a better position, I think, to

actually have some influence, and there may be carrots as well as sticks that we can then apply.

The only way that Fidel's name came up—I think I may have mentioned this in the David Muir article—interview that I did—was I delivered a fairly lengthy statement at the front end about how we're looking forward to a new future in the relationship between our two countries, but that we are going to continue to press on issues of democracy and human rights, which we think are important.

My opening remarks probably took about 15 minutes, which on the phone is a pretty long time. And at the end of that, he said: "Mr. President, you're still a young man. Perhaps you have the"—at the end of my remarks, I apologized for taking such a long time, but I wanted to make sure that before we engaged in the conversation, that we—he was very clear about where I stood. And he said, "Oh, don't worry about it, Mr. President, you're still a young man, and you have still the chance to break Fidel's record. He once spoke 7 hours straight." [*Laughter*]

And then, President Castro proceeded to deliver his own preliminary remarks that lasted at least twice as long as mine. [*Laughter*] And then, I was able to say, "Obviously, it runs in the family." [*Laughter*] But that was the only discussion of Fidel Castro that we had.

I sort of forgot all the other questions. [*Laughter*]

Q. I have a few more if you're—how personally involved are you going to get in the——

The President. Well, with respect to Congress, we cannot unilaterally bring down the embargo. That's codified in the Libertad Act. And what I do think is going to happen, though, is, there's going to be a process where Congress digests it. There are bipartisan supporters of our new approach; there are bipartisan detractors of this new approach. People will see how the actions we take unfold. And I think there's going to be a healthy debate inside of Congress.

And I will certainly weigh in. I think that ultimately, we need to go ahead and pull down the embargo, which I think has been self-defeating in advancing the aims that we're interested in. But I don't anticipate that that happens right away. I think people are going to want to see how does this move forward before there's any serious debate about whether or not we would make major shifts in the embargo.

All right. Roberta Rampton [Reuters]. There you go.

Cyber Attack Against Sony Corporation by North Korea/Potential Meeting Between President Obama and President Raul Castro Ruz of Cuba/Future Travel to Cuba by President Obama

Q. I want to follow on that by asking, under what conditions would you meet with President Castro in Havana? Would you have certain preconditions that you would want to see met before doing that? And on the hack, I know that you said that you're not going to announce your response, but are you—can you say whether you're considering additional economic or financial sanctions on North Korea? Can you rule out the use of military force or some kind of cyber hit of your own?

The President. I think I'm going to leave it where I left it, which is, we just confirmed that it was North Korea; we have been working up a range of options. They will be presented to me. I will make a decision on those based on what I believe is proportional and appropriate to the nature of this crime.

With respect to Cuba, we're not at a stage here where me visiting Cuba or President Castro coming to the United States is in the cards. I don't know how this relationship will develop over the next several years. I'm a fairly young man, so I imagine that at some point in my life I will have the opportunity to visit Cuba and enjoy interacting with the Cuban people. But there's nothing specific where we're trying to target some sort of visit on my part. Okay.

Colleen McCain Nelson [Wall Street Journal].

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. There you are.

The President's Relations With Congress/Bipartisanship

Q. You spoke earlier about 2014 being a breakthrough year, and you ended the year with executive actions on Cuba and immigration and climate change. But you didn't make much progress this year on your legislative agenda. And some Republican lawmakers have said they're less inclined to work with you if you pursue executive actions so aggressively. Are you going to continue to pursue executive actions if that creates more roadblocks for your legislative agenda? Or have you concluded that it's not possible to break the fever in Washington and the partisan gridlock here?

The President. I think there are real opportunities to get things done in Congress. As I said before, I take Speaker Boehner and Mitch McConnell at their words that they want to get things done. I think the American people would like to see us get some things done. The question is going to be, are we able to separate out those areas where we disagree and those areas where we agree? I think there are going to be some tough fights on areas where we disagree.

If Republicans seek to take health care away from people who just got it, they will meet stiff resistance from me. If they try to water down consumer protections that we put in place in the aftermath of the financial crisis, I will say no. And I'm confident that I'll be able to uphold vetoes of those types of provisions. But on increasing American exports, on simplifying our tax system, on rebuilding our infrastructure, my hope is that we can get some things done.

I've never been persuaded by this argument that if it weren't for the executive actions, they would have been more productive. There's no evidence of that. So I intend to continue to do what I've been doing, which is, where I see a big problem and the opportunity to help the American people, and it is within my lawful authority to provide that help, I'm going to do it. And I will then, side by side, reach out to Members of Congress, reach out to Republicans, and say, let's work together; I'd rather do it with you.

Immigration is the classic example. I was really happy when the Senate passed a bipartisan, comprehensive immigration bill. And I did everything I could for a year and a half to provide Republicans the space to act and showed not only great patience, but flexibility, saying to them, look, if there are specific changes you'd like to see, we're willing to compromise, we're willing to be patient, we're willing to work with you. Ultimately, it wasn't forthcoming.

And so the question is going to be, I think, if executive actions on areas like minimum wage or equal pay or having a more sensible immigration system are important to Republicans, if they care about those issues, and the executive actions are bothering them, there is a very simple solution, and that is, pass bills. And work with me to make sure I'm willing to sign those bills.

Because both sides are going to have to compromise. On most issues, in order for their initiatives to become law, I'm going to have sign off. And that means they have to take into account the issues that I care about, just as I'm going to have to take into account the issues that they care about.

All right. I think this is going to be our last question. Juliet Alsprin [Juliet Eilperin, Washington Post].

Q. Kind of——

The President. There you go.

Keystone XL Pipeline Project

Q. Thanks so much. So one of the first bills that Mitch McConnell said he will send to you is one that would authorize the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.

The President. Right.

Q. When you talked about this in the past, you've minimized the benefits and you've highlighted some of the risks associated with that project. I'm wondering if you could tell us both what you would do when faced with that bill, given the Republican majority that we'll have in both Chambers, and also, what do you see as the benefits? And given the precipitous drop we've seen in oil prices recently, does that

change the calculus in terms of how it would contribute to climate change, and whether you think it makes sense to go ahead with that project?

The President. Well, I don't think I've minimized the benefits, I think I've described the benefits. If—at issue in Keystone is not American oil. It is Canadian oil that is drawn out of tar sands in Canada. That oil currently is being shipped out through rail or trucks, and it would save Canadian oil companies and the Canadian oil industry an enormous amount of money if they could simply pipe it all the way through the United States down to the Gulf. Once that oil gets to the Gulf, it is then entering into the world market, and it would be sold all around the world.

So there's no—I won't say "no"—there is very little impact, nominal impact, on U.S. gas prices, what the average American consumer cares about, by having this pipeline come through. And sometimes, the way this gets sold is, let's get this oil, and it's going to come here. And the implication is, is that's going to oil—lower gas prices here in the United States. It's not. There's a global oil market. It's very good for Canadian oil companies, and it's good for the Canadian oil industry, but it's not going to be a huge benefit to U.S. consumers. It's not even going to be a nominal benefit to U.S. consumers.

Now, the construction of the pipeline itself will create probably a couple thousand jobs. Those are temporary jobs until the construction actually happens. There's probably some additional jobs that can be created in the refining process down in the Gulf. Those aren't completely insignificant; if—it's just like any other project. But when you consider what we could be doing if we were rebuilding our roads and bridges around the country, something that Congress could authorize, we could probably create hundreds of thousands of jobs or a million jobs. So, if that's the argument, there are a lot of more direct ways to create well-paying American construction jobs.

And then, with respect to the costs, all I've said is that I want to make sure that if in fact this project goes forward, that it's not adding to the problem of climate change, which I think is very serious and does impose serious costs on the American people, some of them long term, but significant costs nonetheless. If we've got more flooding, more wildfires, more drought, there are direct economic impacts on that.

And as we're now rebuilding after Sandy, for example, we're having to consider, how do we increase preparedness in how we structure infrastructure and housing and so forth along the Jersey Shore? That's an example of the kind of costs that are imposed, and you can put a dollar figure on it.

So, in terms of process, you've got a Nebraska judge that's still determining whether or not the new path for this pipeline is appropriate. Once that is resolved, then the State Department will have all the information it needs to make its decision.

But I've just tried to give this perspective, because I think that there's been this tendency to really hype this thing as some magic formula and—to what ails the U.S. economy, and it's hard to see on paper where exactly they're getting that information from.

In terms of oil prices and how it impacts the decision, I think that it won't have a significant impact except perhaps in the minds of folks. When gas prices are lower, maybe they're more—less susceptible to the argument that this is the answer to lowering gas prices. But it was never going to be the answer to lowering gas prices, because the oil that would be piped through the Keystone pipeline would go into the world market. And that's what determines oil prices, ultimately.

Q. And in terms of Congress forcing your hand on this, is this something where you'd clearly say you're not going to let Congress force your hand on whether to approve or disapprove this program?

The President. I'll see what they do. We'll take that up in the new year.

Q. Any New Year's resolutions?

Impact of the President's Policies on African Americans/Education/Race Relations/Law Enforcement-Community Relations/Criminal Justice Reform

The President. I'll ask—April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks], go ahead. Go ahead.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Last question, I guess. [*Laughter*] Mr. President, 6 years ago this month, I asked you what was the state of Black America in the Oval Office, and you said it was the "the best of times and the worst of times." You said it was the best of times in the sense that there was—has never been more opportunity for African Americans to receive a good education and the worst of times for unemployment and the lack of opportunity. Well, ending 2014, what is the state of Black America as we talk about those issues as well as race relations in this country?

The President. Like the rest of America, Black America in the aggregate is better off now than it was when I came into office. The jobs that have been created, the people who've gotten health insurance, the housing equity that's been recovered, the 401 pensions that have been recovered—a lot of those folks are African American. They're better off than they were.

The gap between income and wealth of White and Black America persists. And we've got more work to do on that front. I've been consistent in saying that this is a legacy of a troubled racial past of Jim Crow and slavery. That's not an excuse for Black folks. And I think the overwhelming majority of Black people understand it's not an excuse. They're working hard. They're out there hustling and trying to get an education, trying to send their kids to college. But they're starting behind, oftentimes, in the race.

And what's true for all Americans is, we should be willing to provide people a hand up, not a handout, but help folks get that good early childhood education, help them graduate from high school, help them afford college. If they do, they're going to be able to succeed, and that's going to be good for all of us.

And we've seen some progress. The education reforms that we've initiated are showing measurable results. We have the highest high school graduation that we've seen in a very long time. We have—are seeing record numbers of young people attending college. In many States that have initiated reforms, you're seeing progress in math scores and reading scores for African American and Latino students as well as the broader population. But we've still got more work to go.

Now, obviously, how we're thinking about race relations right now has been colored by Ferguson, the Garner case in New York, a growing awareness in the broader population of what I think many communities of color have understood for some time, and that is that there are specific instances, at least, where law enforcement doesn't feel as if it's being applied in a colorblind fashion.

The Task Force that I formed is supposed to report back to me in 90 days, not with a bunch of abstract musings about race relations, but some really concrete, practical things that police departments and law enforcement agencies can begin implementing right now to rebuild trust between communities of color and the police department.

And my intention is to, as soon as I get those recommendations, to start implementing them. Some of them we'll be able to do through executive action. Some of them will require congressional action. Some of them will require action on the part of States and local jurisdictions.

But I actually think it's been a healthy conversation that we've had. These are not new phenomenon. The fact that they're now surfacing, in part because people are able to film what have just been, in the past, stories passed on around a kitchen table, allows people to make their own assessments and evaluations. And you're not going to solve the problem if it's not being talked about.

In the meantime, we've been moving forward on criminal justice reform issues more broadly. One of the things I didn't talk about in my opening statement is the fact that last year was the first time in 40 years where we had the

Federal prison population go down and the crime rate go down at the same time, which indicates the degree to which it's possible for us to think smarter about who we're incarcerating, how long we're incarcerating, how are we dealing with nonviolent offenders, how are we dealing with drug offenses, diversion programs, drug courts. We can do a better job of—and save money in the process by initiating some of these reforms. And I've been really pleased to see that we've had Republicans and Democrats in Congress who are interested in these issues as well.

The one thing I will say—and this is going to be the last thing I say—[*laughter*]—is that I—one of the great things about this job is you get to know the American people. I mean, you meet folks from every walk of life and every region of the country and every race and every faith. And what I don't think is always captured in our political debates is, the vast majority of people are just trying to do the right thing, and people are basically good and have good intentions. Sometimes, our institutions and our systems don't work as well as they should. Sometimes, you've got a police department that has gotten into bad habits over a period of time and hasn't maybe surfaced some hidden biases that we all carry around. But if you offer practical solutions, I think people want to fix these problems. It's not—this isn't a situation where people feel good seeing somebody choked and dying. I think that troubles everybody. So there's an opportunity of all of us to come together and to take a practical approach to these problems.

And I guess that's my general theme for the end of the year, which is, we've gone through difficult times. It is your job, press corps, to report on all the mistakes that are made and all the bad things that happen and the crises that look like they're popping. And I understand that. But through persistent effort and faith in the American people, things get better. The economy has gotten better. Our ability to generate clean energy has gotten better. We know more about how to educate our kids. We solved problems. Ebola is a real crisis; you get a mistake in the first case because it's not something that's been seen before—we fix it. You have some unaccompanied children who spike at a border, and it may not get fixed in the time frame of the news cycle, but it gets fixed.

And part of what I hope, as we reflect on the new year, this should generate is some confidence. America knows how to solve problems. And when we work together, we can't be stopped.

And now I'm going to go on vacation. *Mele Kalikimaka,* everybody. [*Laughter*] *Mahalo*. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1:53 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest; Supreme Commander Kim Jong Un of North Korea; actors Seth Rogen and James Franco, who starred in the Sony Pictures film "The Interview"; David Muir, weekend anchor, ABC News' "World News" program; Stephanie F. Stacy, district judge, Lancaster County, NE; and Eric Garner, who died during an attempted arrest by New York City police officers on July 17. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; and S. 744.

Statement on Signing the Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015

December 19, 2014

Today I have signed into law H.R. 3979, the Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015. I have signed this annual defense authorization legislation because it will provide vital benefits for military personnel and their families, as well as critical contingency authorities needed to counter the Is-

lamic State of Iraq and the Levant and to respond to emerging needs in the face of evolving terrorist threats and emergent crises worldwide.

Earlier this month, the Department of Defense transferred the last remaining third-country nationals held in U.S. custody in Afghanistan, ending U.S. detention operations in Afghanistan. Yet, halfway around the world, the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, remains open for the 13th consecutive year, costing the American people hundreds of millions of dollars each year and undermining America's standing in the world. As I have said many times, the continued operation of this detention facility weakens our national security by draining resources, damaging our relationships with key allies and partners, and emboldening violent extremists. Closing the detention facility is a national imperative.

I have repeatedly called upon the Congress to work with my administration to close the detention facility at Guantanamo once and for all. Individuals from across the political spectrum have recognized that the facility should be closed. But instead of removing unwarranted and burdensome restrictions that curtail the executive branch's options for managing the detainee population, this bill continues them. Section 1032 renews the bar against using appropriated funds to construct or modify any facility in the United States, its territories, or possessions to house any Guantanamo detainee in the custody or under the control of the Department of Defense unless authorized by the Congress. Section 1033 likewise renews the bar against using appropriated funds to transfer Guantanamo detainees into the United States for any purpose. The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, contains similar provisions as well as those relating to existing restrictions on the transfer of detainees abroad. I have consistently opposed these restrictions and will continue to work with the Congress to remove them. More than 80 percent of detainees at one time held at the detention facility have now been transferred. The executive branch must have the flexibility, with regard to those detainees who remain, to determine when and where to prosecute them, based on the facts and circumstances of each case and our national security interests, and when and where to transfer them consistent with our national security and our humane treatment policy. Under certain circumstances, the provisions concerning detainee transfers in both bills would violate constitutional separation of powers principles. In the event that the restrictions on the transfer of detainees operate in a manner that violates constitutional separation of powers principles, my administration will implement them in a manner that avoids the constitutional conflict.

The Guantanamo detention facility's continued operation undermines our national security. We must close it. I call on Members from both sides of the aisle to work with us to bring this chapter of American history to a close.

NOTE: H.R. 3979, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 113–291. The statement referred to H.R. 83, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, which was approved December 16 and assigned Public Law No. 113–235.

Statement on Signing the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014
December 19, 2014

Today I have signed into law S. 2673, the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014, an Act that underscores the United States unshakeable commitment to Israel's security and its future. This bipartisan piece of legislation reflects the importance placed by my administration on strengthening and deepening U.S.-Israel bilateral cooperation and ties. It reinforces critical defense and security programs, which have reached an unprecedented level under my administration. It also lays the groundwork for increased trade and cooperation across a range of cutting-edge fields, including energy, water, agriculture, and

technology. Sections 11(b) and 12(c)(2) of this bill purport to require me to provide to the Congress certain diplomatic communications and direct the Secretary of State to undertake certain diplomatic initiatives. Consistent with longstanding constitutional practice, my administration will interpret and implement these sections in a manner that does not interfere with my constitutional authority to conduct diplomacy and to protect the confidentiality of diplomatic communications.

NOTE: S. 2673, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 113–296.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting Certain Transactions With Respect to the Crimea Region of Ukraine

December 19, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") that takes additional steps to address the Russian occupation of the Crimea region of Ukraine. These steps have been taken with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014, expanded in scope by Executive Order 13661 of March 16, 2014, and further expanded in scope by Executive Order 13662 of March 20, 2014.

The order prohibits new investment by United States persons in the Crimea region of Ukraine; the importation of goods, services, or technology into the United States from the Crimea region of Ukraine; and the exportation, reexportation, sale, or supply of goods, services, or technology from the United States or by a United States person to the Crimea region of Ukraine. It also prohibits the facilitation of any such transactions. The order also blocks the property and interests in property of any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to operate in the Crimea region of Ukraine;
- to be a leader of an entity operating in the Crimea region of Ukraine;
- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

In addition, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien determined to meet one or more of the above criteria.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA, as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The letter referred to Executive Order 13685, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Signing an Executive Order Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting Certain Transactions With Respect to the Crimea Region of Ukraine

December 19, 2014

Today I issued an Executive order taking further steps with respect to the situation in Ukraine. The E.O. prohibits the export of goods, technology, or services to Crimea and prohibits the import of goods, technology, or services from Crimea, as well as new investments in Crimea. The E.O. also authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to impose sanctions on individuals and entities operating in Crimea. The E.O. is intended to provide clarity to U.S. corporations doing business in the region and reaffirm that the United States will not accept Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea. I again call on Russia to end its occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea, cease its support to separatists in eastern Ukraine, and fulfill its commitments under the Minsk agreements. My administration will continue to work closely with allies and partners in Europe and internationally to respond to events in Ukraine and to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well its democratic development and reform efforts. We will continue to review and calibrate our sanctions, in close coordination with our international partners, to respond to Russia's actions.

NOTE: The statement referred to Executive Order 13685, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address

December 20, 2014

Hi, everybody. As 2014 comes to an end, we can enter the new year with new confidence that America is making significant strides where it counts.

The steps we took nearly 6 years ago to rescue our economy and rebuild it on a new foundation helped make 2014 the strongest year for job growth since the 1990s. Over the past 57 months, our businesses have created nearly 11 million new jobs. And in a hopeful sign for middle class families, wages are on the rise again.

Our investments in American manufacturing have helped fuel its best stretch of job growth since the nineties. America is now the number one producer of oil and gas, saving drivers about 70 cents a gallon at the pump over last Christmas. The auto industry we rescued is on track for its strongest year since 2005. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, about 10 million Americans have gained health insurance in the past year alone. And since I took office, we have cut our deficits by about two-thirds.

Meanwhile, around the world, America is leading. We're leading the coalition to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. We're leading the global fight to combat the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. We're leading global efforts to address climate change, including last month's joint announcement with China. We're turning a new page in our relationship with the Cuban people.

And in less than 2 weeks, after more than 13 years, our combat mission in Afghanistan will be over, and our war there will come to a responsible end. Today, more of our troops are home for the holidays than at any time in over a decade. Still, many of our men and women in uniform will spend this Christmas in harm's way. And as Commander in Chief, I want our troops to know: your country is united in our support and gratitude for you and your families.

The 6 years since the financial crisis have demanded hard work and sacrifice on everyone's part. But as a country, we have every right to be proud of what we've got to show for it: more jobs, more insured, a growing economy, shrinking deficits, bustling industry, booming energy.

Pick any metric you want—America's resurgence is real. And we now have the chance to reverse the decades-long erosion of middle class jobs and incomes. We just have to invest in the things that we know will secure even faster growth in higher paying jobs for more Americans. We have to make sure our economy, our justice system, and our Government work not only for a few, but for all of us. And I look forward to working together with the new Congress next year on these priorities.

Sure, we'll disagree on some things. We'll have to compromise on others. I'll act on my own when it's necessary. But I'll never stop trying to make life better for people like you.

Because thanks to your efforts, a new foundation is laid, a new future is ready to be written. We have set the stage for a new American moment, and I'm going to spend every minute of my last 2 years making sure we seize it.

On behalf of the Obama family, I wish all of you a very merry Christmas.

Thanks, and have a wonderful holiday season.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:15 p.m. on December 19 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast on December 20. In the address, the President referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 19, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 20.

Statement on the Deaths of Wenjian Liu and Rafael L. Ramos
December 20, 2014

I unconditionally condemn today's murder of two police officers in New York City. Two brave men won't be going home to their loved ones tonight, and for that, there is no justification. The officers who serve and protect our communities risk their own safety for ours every single day, and they deserve our respect and gratitude every single day. Tonight I ask people to reject violence and words that harm and turn to words that heal: prayer, patient dialogue, and sympathy for the friends and family of the fallen.

Statement on the Stormont House Agreement in Northern Ireland
December 23, 2014

I and Vice President Biden welcome the news from Belfast this morning that the political parties of Northern Ireland, together with the governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland, have reached a broad agreement that paves the way for the continuation of Northern Ireland's governing institutions. Just as importantly, the agreement also enables further progress on dealing with the issues of the past. I congratulate all the leaders involved who, once again, have shown that when there is a will and the courage to overcome the issues that have divided the people of Northern Ireland, there is a way to succeed for the benefit of all. I look forward to the final ratification of this agreement by all the relevant parties and to the continued advancement of a peace process that is leading to a better future for the people of Northern Ireland. I also want to thank Gary Hart for his hard work in support of this agreement.

NOTE: The statement referred to former Sen. Gary W. Hart, in his capacity as the U.S. Secretary of State's Personal Representative for Northern Ireland.

The President's Weekly Address
December 25, 2014

The President. Merry Christmas, everybody! Now, we're not going to take too much of your time, because today is about family and being together with the ones you love. And luckily for me, that means I get a little help on the weekly address as well.

The First Lady. The holidays at the White House are such a wonderful time of year. We fill the halls with decorations, Christmas trees, and carolers, and this year, we invited more than 65,000 people to join us. Our theme was "A Children's Winter Wonderland," and Americans, young and old, had a chance to come together and celebrate the season.

The President. And today our family will join millions across the country in celebrating the birth of Jesus, the birth not just of a baby in a manger, but the message that has changed the world: to reach out to the sick, the hungry, the troubled, and above all else, to love one another as we would be loved ourselves.

The First Lady. And we hope that this holiday season will be a chance for us to live out that message: to bridge our differences and lift up our family, friends, and neighbors and to reconnect with the values that bind us together. And as a country, that also means celebrating and honoring those who have served and sacrificed for all of us: our troops, veterans, and their families.

The President. In just a few days, our combat mission in Afghanistan will be over. Our longest war will come to a responsible end. And that gives us an opportunity to step back and reflect upon all that these families have given us. We're able to gather with family and friends because our troops are willing to hug theirs goodbye and step forward to serve. After a long day, we can come home because they're willing to leave their families and deploy. We can celebrate the holidays because they're willing to miss their own.

The First Lady. And so, as our troops continue to transition back home—back to our businesses, our schools, our congregations, and our communities—it's up to all of us to serve them as well as they've served us. And you can visit joiningforces.gov to find out how you can honor and support the troops, veterans, and military families in your communities. That's something we can do not only during the holiday season, but all year round.

The President. So merry Christmas, everybody. May God bless you all. And we wish you and your family a happy and healthy 2015.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:15 p.m. on December 19 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast on December 25. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 24.

Statement on the Observance of Kwanzaa
December 26, 2014

Michelle and I extend our warmest wishes to those celebrating Kwanzaa this holiday season. Today begins a celebration highlighting the rich African American heritage and culture through the seven principles of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. During this season, families come together to reflect on blessings of the past year and look forward to the promises in the year ahead. As we remain committed to building a country that provides opportunity for all, this time of year reminds us that there is much to be thankful for.

As families around the world unite to light the kinara today, our family extends our prayers and best wishes during this holiday season.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

Statement on the End of United States Combat Operations in Afghanistan
December 28, 2014

Today's ceremony in Kabul marks a milestone for our country. For more than 13 years, ever since nearly 3,000 innocent lives were taken from us on 9/11, our Nation has been at war in Afghanistan. Now, thanks to the extraordinary sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, our combat mission in Afghanistan is ending, and the longest war in American history is coming to a responsible conclusion.

On this day we give thanks to our troops and intelligence personnel who have been relentless against the terrorists responsible for 9/11, devastating the core Al Qaida leadership, delivering justice to Usama bin Laden, disrupting terrorist plots, and saving countless American lives. We are safer and our Nation is more secure because of their service. At the same time, our courageous military and diplomatic personnel in Afghanistan—along with our NATO allies and coalition partners—have helped the Afghan people reclaim their communities, take the lead for their own security, hold historic elections, and complete the first democratic transfer of power in their country's history.

We honor the profound sacrifices that have made this progress possible. We salute every American—military and civilian, including our dedicated diplomats and development workers—who have served in Afghanistan, many on multiple tours, just as their families have sacrificed at home. We pledge to give our many wounded warriors, with wounds seen and unseen, the world-class care and treatment they have earned. Most of all, we remember the more than 2,200 American patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan, and we pledge to stand with their Gold Star families who need the everlasting love and support of a grateful nation.

Afghanistan remains a dangerous place, and the Afghan people and their security forces continue to make tremendous sacrifices in defense of their country. At the invitation of the Afghan Government, and to preserve the gains we have made together, the United States—along with our allies and partners—will maintain a limited military presence in Afghanistan to train, advise, and assist Afghan forces and to conduct counterterrorism operations against the remnants of Al Qaida. Our personnel will continue to face risks, but this reflects the enduring commitment of the United States to the Afghan people and to a united, secure, and sovereign Afghanistan that is never again used as a source of attacks against our Nation.

These past 13 years have tested our Nation and our military. But compared to the nearly 180,000 American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan when I took office, we now have fewer than 15,000 in those countries. Some 90 percent of our troops are home. Our military remains the finest in the world, and we will remain vigilant against terrorist attacks and in defense of the freedoms and values we hold dear. And with growing prosperity here at home, we enter a new year with new confidence, indebted to our fellow Americans in uniform who keep us safe and free.

Appendix A—Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this book.

July 1

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the President joined members of his staff to watch the U.S.-Belgium World Cup soccer game on television.

July 2

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia to express his best wishes on the occasion of Ramadan and discuss the situation in Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had lunch with leading economists to discuss efforts to accelerate economic growth, expand opportunity, and improve U.S. business competitiveness. Later, in the Oval Office, the President recorded an interview with Kai Ryssdal of American Public Media's "Marketplace Morning Report" program for later broadcast.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with U.S. Men's National Soccer Team captain Clinton D. Dempsey and goalkeeper Timothy M. Howard to congratulate them on their team's performance in the 2014 Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup in Brazil.

July 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, at 1776, a startup hub and technology incubator, he greeted members and participated in one-on-one conversations with young entrepreneurs.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Then, in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the situation in eastern Ukraine. Later, in the Library, he recorded an interview with Ken Burns of PBS. Mrs. Obama later joined him for a second interview with Mr. Burns.

July 6

The White House announced that the President will travel to Austin, TX, on July 9 and 10.

July 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to discuss the situation in eastern Ukraine, ongoing peace and reconciliation efforts with separatist elements, and international diplomatic efforts to secure Russian support for the new Ukrainian Government.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Afghan Presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah to discuss the June runoff election, the need for calm and restraint during the final tabulation of results, and the necessity for a thorough investigation of any election fraud.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Denver, CO, on July 8 and 9.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Dallas, TX, on July 9.

July 8

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with North Atlantic Treaty Organization Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen to discuss the situation in Ukraine and the June runoff election in Afghanistan.

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President and Mrs. Obama hosted a reception for the diplomatic corps. Later, he traveled to Denver, CO, arriving in the evening.

Also in the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Afghan Presidential candidate Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai to discuss the June runoff election, the need for calm and restraint during the final tabulation of results, and the necessity for a thorough investigation of any election fraud.

In the evening, upon arrival in Denver, the President traveled to the Wazee Supper Club, where he had dinner with wage worker Alex Dooley, college student Elizabeth Cooper, small-business owner Carolyn Reed and her husband David Johnson, and teacher Leslie Gresham, who had written him letters about issues affecting the middle class. Later, he took a walk in the area surrounding the restaurant and greeted local residents. Then, he traveled to the Wynkoop Brewing Company, where he visited with patrons, had a beer, and shot some pool with Gov. John W. Hickenlooper of Colorado.

Later in the evening, the President traveled to the Renaissance Denver Hotel, where he remained overnight.

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding from May 13 through 22.

The President announced his intention to nominate Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall to be Deputy Secretary of Energy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jess Lippincott Baily to be Ambassador to Macedonia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Judith B. Cefkin to be Ambassador to the Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert F. Cekuta to be Ambassador to Azerbaijan.

The President announced his intention to nominate S. Fitzgerald Haney to be Ambassador to Costa Rica.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michele J. Sison to be U.S. Deputy Representative to the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, and U.S. Deputy Representative in the Security Council of the United Nations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Margaret A. Uyehara to be Ambassador to Montenegro.

The President announced his intention to nominate James P. Zumwalt to be Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea Bissau.

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding from May 13 through 22.

July 9

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Dallas, TX. Upon arrival at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, he and Gov. J. Richard Perry of Texas traveled to Dallas Love Field airport. Later, at DalFort Fueling, he met with State and local officials and faith leaders to discuss the influx of unaccompanied alien children arriving across the Mexico-U.S. border.

In the evening, the President traveled to Austin, TX. Later, he traveled to the Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol, where he remained overnight.

July 10

In the morning, at a private residence, the President attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser. Later, at the Magnolia Cafe, he had coffee with Kinsey Button, a student at the University of Texas at Austin who had written him a letter about issues affecting her and her family. He also visited with staff and greeted patrons.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Franklin Barbecue, where he purchased lunch and visited briefly with patrons. Then, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to discuss the situation in Gaza, the recent kidnapping and murder of Israeli and Palestinian teenagers, and joint efforts to negotiate a cease-fire agreement. They also discussed international diplomatic efforts to halt the development of nuclear weapons in Iran.

The President announced his intention to nominate Craig B. Allen to be Ambassador to Brunei.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sharon Block to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard M. Mills, Jr., to be Ambassador to Armenia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joseph L. Nimmich to be Deputy Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anne E. Rung to be Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy at the Office of Management and Budget.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alissa M. Starzak to be General Counsel of the Department of the Army.

The President announced his intention to nominate John F. Tefft to be Ambassador to Russia.

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles Benton as a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Robert Langer as a member of the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lillian M. Lowery as a member of the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability for Young Americans.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Advisory Committee on the Arts for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts:

Anne Ashmore-Hudson;
Steven M. Goldman;
Dale LeFebvre; and
Anita Lin.

July 11

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, he met with large company executives and their small-business suppliers to discuss the launch of the SupplierPay initiative, a new partnership between the Federal Government and the private sector to strengthen small businesses by increasing their working capital, and discuss ways to strengthen the national economy.

The White House announced that the President will travel to McLean, VA, on July 15.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to Tbilisi, Georgia, to attend the funeral service of former President Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia: James A. Baker III (head of delegation); and Richard B. Norland.

July 13

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss the situation in Ukraine, the recent Presidential election in Afghanistan, efforts to form a new government in Iraq, and ongoing diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran's development of nuclear weapons.

July 14

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President greeted wounded servicemembers and their families during a tour of the White House. Then, in the Private Dining Room, he and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in

the Oval Office, he participated in a credentialing ceremony for newly appointed Ambassadors to the U.S.: Jose Luis Fialho Rocha of Cabo Verde, Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, Tigran Sargsyan of Armenia, Mamady Conde of Guinea, and Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke of Somalia. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with his senior advisers.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with President Xi Jinping of China to discuss progress achieved during the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, U.S.-China cooperation in the ongoing diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran's development of nuclear weapons and ensure that North Korea meets its denuclearization commitments, and the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders' meeting in Beijing.

The White House announced that the President will award the Medal of Honor to S. Sgt. Ryan M. Pitts, USA, on July 21.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Wilmington, DE, on July 17.

The President declared a major disaster in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding on June 3 and 4.

July 15

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to McLean, VA, where he toured the Federal Highway Administration's Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center with Secretary of Transportation Anthony R. Foxx, Research Center Director Michael F. Trentacoste, and Connected Vehicle Program Manager Carl K. Andersen. During the tour, he tested a self-driving car simulator and met with researchers.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the situation in Ukraine, ongoing diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran's development of nuclear weapons, and Germany-U.S. intelligence cooperation.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City on July 17.

The President announced the appointment of the following individuals as members of the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations:

J. David Cox;
Michael B. Filler;
David J. Holway; and
H.T. Nguyen.

July 16

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry. Later, in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, they met with members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to discuss immigration reform and the President's request for supplemental funding to address the influx of migrants in the Río Grande Valley areas of the Mexico-U.S. border.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs Jonathan D. Samuels.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Martha's Vineyard, MA, on August 9.

July 17

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situation in Ukraine. During the call, President Putin noted early reports of a downed passenger jet near the Russia-Ukraine border. Later, the President was briefed on the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 near the Russia-Ukraine border. Then, he traveled to Wilmington, DE.

In the afternoon, upon arrival in Wilmington, the President traveled to the Charcoal Pit

restaurant, where he had lunch with Newark, DE, resident Tanei Benjamin, who had written a letter to the President describing her experience as a working single mother. Then, he traveled to Port of Wilmington, DE. Later, he traveled to New York City. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had separate telephone conversations with President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine and Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia to discuss the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 and offer U.S. assistance in investigating the crash. President Obama and President Poroshenko discussed the need for all evidence to remain in place on Ukrainian territory until examined by international investigators, and President Obama expressed his condolences to Prime Minister Najib and the Malaysian people for the loss of life.

Later in the afternoon, upon arrival in New York City, the President had a telephone conversation with Secretary of State John F. Kerry to discuss the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 and the situation in Israel and Gaza. Then, he received a teleconference briefing from Director of the Central Intelligence Agency John O. Brennan, White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough, Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence Stephanie O'Sullivan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco, and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes on the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17. Later, at a private residence, he attended a Democratic National Committee fundraiser.

In the evening, at a private residence, the President participated in a House Majority PAC roundtable discussion. Also in the evening, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands to express his condolences for the deaths of Dutch citizens traveling on Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 and offer U.S. assistance in investigating the crash. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Charles C. Adams, Jr., to be Ambassador to Finland.

The President announced his intention to nominate Charles H. Fulghum to be Chief Financial Officer at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to nominate Adri D. Jayaratne to be Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to nominate Barbara A. Leaf to be Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates.

The President announced his intention to nominate Virginia E. Palmer to be Ambassador to Malawi.

The President announced his intention to nominate William V. Roebuck to be Ambassador to Bahrain.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mickey D. Barnett to be a Governor on the Board of Governors of the U.S. Postal Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate James L. Huffman to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Matthew V. Masterson and Christy A. McCormick to be Commissioners on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Donald J. Butt as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ethan Epstein as a member of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Military Academy.

The President announced his intention to appoint Virna L. Winters as a member of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

July 18

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had a meeting with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew, followed by a meeting with Secretary Lew and Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell.

Also in the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia to discuss the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, including the importance of a prompt, full, unimpeded, and transparent international investigation and the need for immediate access by international investigators to the crash site. The President offered his condolences for the deaths of Australian citizens traveling on Flight 17 and continuing U.S. support and cooperation.

In the evening, the President traveled to Camp David, MD, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in Ukraine; recent actions taken by the U.S. and the European Union against individuals and entities from Russia and elsewhere involved in destabilizing Ukraine; and Russia's responsibility for denying separatists in eastern Ukraine continued access to heavy weapons and other support. Also during the day, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss the crash of Flight 17 and recent international efforts to increase the costs to Russia for its failure to deescalate the situation in Ukraine. They also discussed the situation in Israel and Gaza and ongoing diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran's development of nuclear weapons.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Otto Fernando Pérez Molina of Guatemala, President Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado of Honduras, and President Salvador Sánchez Cerén of El Salvador to the White House on July 25.

July 19

The White House announced that the President will visit Walker-Jones Education Campus in Washington, DC, on July 21.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Seattle, WA, on July 22.

July 20

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to discuss the situation in Gaza.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia to discuss the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 and the necessity of a prompt international investigation.

July 21

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Situation Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with his Homeland Security Council to discuss the humanitarian situation at the Mexico-U.S. border.

Also in the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland to discuss the situation in Ukraine and the upcoming NATO summit in Wales.

The White House announced that the President will travel to San Francisco, CA, on July 22.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Los Angeles, CA, on July 23.

The President declared a major disaster in Minnesota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, straight-line winds, flooding, landslides, and mudslides from June 11 through July 11.

July 22

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President met with *Apollo 11* crewmembers Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., and Michael Collins and Carol Armstrong, wife of late *Apollo 11* crewmember Neal A. Armstrong, to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the first Moon landing.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands to discuss the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 and the importance of securing the crash site to allow for a full and transparent international investigation. Later, he traveled to Seattle, WA.

In the evening, at a private residence, the President attended a Senate Majority PAC roundtable fundraiser event. Later, he traveled to San Francisco, CA. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with President-elect Joko "Jokowi" Widodo of Indonesia to congratulate him on his July 9 election victory, commend the Indonesian people on their commitment to democracy, and reaffirm Indonesia-U.S. relations. Upon arrival in San Francisco, he traveled to the InterContinental San Francisco Hotel, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will award the 2013 National Medal of Arts and National Humanities Medal on July 28.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jeffery M. Baran and Stephen G. Burns to be Commissioners of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jonodev O. Chaudhuri to be Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Anita Bevacqua McBride and Joseph Falk as members of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

July 23

In the morning, the President traveled to the Four Seasons Hotel San Francisco, where he attended a House Majority PAC event. Later, he traveled to Los Altos Hills, CA.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Los Angeles, CA. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Secretary of State John F. Kerry to discuss efforts to negotiate a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas. Upon arrival in Los Angeles, he traveled to the Four Seasons Los Angeles at Beverly Hills hotel in Beverly Hills. Later, he traveled to Los Angeles.

In the evening, the President returned to the Four Seasons Los Angeles at Beverly Hills hotel, where he remained overnight.

The President declared an emergency in Washington and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area affected by wildfires beginning on July 9 and continuing.

July 24

In the morning, the President traveled to a private residence, where he participated in a Democratic National Committee roundtable discussion.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Canter's Fairfax delicatessen and restaurant, where he visited with patrons and had lunch with Katrice Mubiru, Aaron Anderson, Joan Waddell, and Kati Koster, who had all written letters to him about issues affecting the middle class. Later, at Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, in the library, he participated in a live interview with Steve Liesman of CNBC.

Later in the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico to discuss the situation at the Mexico-U.S. border. He also had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia and Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands to discuss the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, express again his condolences on behalf of the American people, and reaffirm the need for full, international access to the crash site, an open and transparent investigation, and repatriation of remains.

The White House announced that the President will deliver remarks at the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Presidential Summit on July 28.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas R. Frieden to be Representative of the U.S. on the Executive Board of the World Health Organization.

The President announced his intention to nominate Perry L. Holloway to be Ambassador to Guyana.

The President announced his intention to nominate Willie E. May to be Under Secretary for Standards and Technology at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to nominate Therese W. McMillan to be Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration.

The President announced his intention to nominate Pamela L. Spratlen to be Ambassador to Uzbekistan.

The President announced his intention to appoint Betsaida Alcantara as Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced his intention to appoint Karen K. Narasaki and Patricia Timmons-Goodson as Commissioners of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

The President announced his intention to appoint Michael P. Ross as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President declared a major disaster in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from June 14 through 23.

The President declared a major disaster in Nebraska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from June 14 through 21.

July 25

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he had separate telephone conversations with Afghan Presidential candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai to thank them for supporting the agreement to form a national unity government and encourage them to accept the audit of ballots cast in the June 14 runoff election.

During the day, in the East Room, the President visited with members of the American Legion Boys and Girls State programs and participated in a photo opportunity. Then, in the Vice President's Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden met with 108-year-old Lucy Coffey, the oldest living female U.S. veteran, to thank her for her service in World War II.

July 26

The White House announced that the President will travel to Kansas City, MO, on July 29.

July 27

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to discuss the situation in Gaza and international efforts to secure a renewed cease-fire based on the November 2012 agreement.

July 28

In the morning, the President participated in a video conference with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, President François Hollande of France, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, and Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy to discuss the situations in Ukraine, Gaza, Iraq, and Libya.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the World War I Centennial Commemoration in Liege, Belgium, on August 4:

John M. McHugh (head of delegation);
Denise Campbell Bauer;
Philip M. Breedlove; and
Alfred A. Valenzuela.

The President announced his intention to nominate David N. Saperstein to be Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom at the Department of State.

The President declared a major disaster in Nebraska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from June 1 through 4.

The President declared a major disaster in South Dakota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, local, and tribal recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding from June 13 through 20.

July 29

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the

Roosevelt Room, he met with House Democrats to discuss the national economy.

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President visited with the summer class of White House Interns and participated in a photo opportunity. Later, he traveled to Bethesda, MD, where, at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, he visited with wounded servicemembers and their families. Then, he traveled to Kansas City, MO, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, at Arthur Bryant's Barbeque restaurant, the President had dinner with public sector employee Victor L. Fugate, Jr., small-business owner Valerie McCaw, nonprofit worker Mark Turner, and neighborhood organizer Becky Forrest, who had all written letters to him about issues affecting the middle class.

July 30

In the morning, the President traveled to Parkville, MO, where, at Parkville Coffee shop, he visited with patrons and staff and ordered drinks. Then, at the Cool Vintage Watches memorabilia shop and Peddlers Wagon quilt and gift shop, he visited with staff.

In the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Manson K. Brown to be Assistant Secretary for Environmental Observation and Prediction at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carmen A. Corrales to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Rafael J. López to be Commissioner on Children, Youth, and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The President announced his intention to appoint Evan J. Wallach as a member of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Naval Academy

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China:

Christopher P. Lu;
Tom Malinowski;
Daniel R. Russel;
Stefan M. Selig; and
Sarah Sewall.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans:

Peggy L. Brookins;
Kent McGuire;
Evelynn M. Hammonds;
Michael T. Nettles;
Spencer Overton;
Becky Pringle; and
John Rice.

The President announced his intention to appoint Regina Stanback Stroud as a member of the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability for Young Americans.

July 31

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Cabinet Room, they met with Members of Congress to discuss national security issues.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with 2014 Kavli Prize laureates in astrophysics, nanoscience, and neuroscience and participated in a photo opportunity.

The President announced his intention to nominate Andrew L. Eanes to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security at the Social Security Administration.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mari del Carmen Aponte to be Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the Organization of American States, with the rank of Ambassador, at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lourdes M. Castro Ramírez to be Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Brodi L. Fontenot to be Chief Financial Officer at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mary L. Jordan to be a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, and upon appointment, to be designated Chairman.

The President announced his intention to nominate P. David Lopez to be General Counsel of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert T. Yamate to be Ambassador to Madagascar and Comoros.

The President announced the nomination of Allison Dale Burroughs to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

The President announced the nomination of Amit P. Mehta to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

The President announced his intention to appoint Tanya J. Bradsher as Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to appoint Brian de Vallance as Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to appoint John Norris as a member of the President's Global Development Council.

August 1

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situation in Ukraine and Russia-U.S. relations.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a bill-signing ceremony for S. 517, the Unlocking Consumer Choice and Wireless Competition Act.

August 2

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD, where he remained overnight.

August 3

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

August 4

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

During the day, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with his senior advisers.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Fort Belvoir, VA, on August 7.

August 5

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. He also had a telephone conversation with Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC, commander, International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan, to discuss the shooting at Marshal Fahim National Defense University in Kabul, Afghanistan, in which Maj. Gen. Harold J. Greene, USA, was killed and additional coalition military personnel were wounded by a member of the Afghan National Security Forces.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

The President announced the nomination of Jorge L. Alonso and John R. Blakey to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

The President declared a major disaster in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from June 26 through July 7.

August 6

In the afternoon, at the Department of State, the President participated in a family photograph with leaders attending the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit. Later, also at the Department of State, he participated in a leaders session on peace and regional stability, fol-

lowed by a leaders session on governing for the next generation.

In the evening, while en route to the White House, the President was briefed in his limousine by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, USA, on the situation in Iraq. Then, in the Oval Office, they met with the President's national security team.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Juan Manuel Santos Calderon as President of Colombia in Bogota, Colombia, on August 7: Thomas A. Shannon, Jr. (head of delegation); Kevin Whitaker; and Ramona E. Romero.

August 7

In the morning, in the Situation Room, the President met with his national security team to discuss the situation in Iraq. He was also briefed by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco on preparations for Hurricanes Iselle and Julio. Later, he traveled to Fort Belvoir, VA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Then, in the Situation Room, he met with his national security team to discuss the situation in Iraq. Joining the meeting separately by videoconference were Secretary of State John F. Kerry from Afghanistan, Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel from India, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Samantha Power, and Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with his senior advisers.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will travel to Martha's Vineyard, MA, on August 9, and that the President will return to Washington, DC, on August 17, then travel to Martha's Vineyard on August 19, and return to Washington, DC, on August 24.

August 8

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with King Abdullah II of Jordan to discuss the situations in Iraq and Gaza. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez.

Also in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President was briefed by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco, Deputy National Security Adviser Antony J. Blinken, and National Security Adviser to the Vice President Jake Sullivan on the situation in Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with Secretary of Commerce Penny S. Pritzker. Later, in the Map Room, he participated in an interview with Thomas L. Friedman of the New York Times for later broadcast online.

August 9

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to discuss the situation in Iraq, the need for an urgent, international response to the humanitarian crisis on Mount Sinjar, the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization to all Iraqi communities, and targeted strikes to protect U.S. personnel and prevent ISIL's advance on the city of Erbil. He also had a separate telephone conversation with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss the situations in Iraq and Ukraine and efforts to contain the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

Later in the morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughter Malia traveled to Chilmark, MA, arriving in the afternoon. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the situation in Ukraine.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA.

In the evening, the President returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, where he remained overnight.

August 10

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA.

In the evening, the President returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, MA, where he remained overnight.

August 11

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine to discuss the situation in eastern Ukraine, U.S. support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, Russia's continued military intervention in Ukraine's affairs, and efforts to deliver multilateral humanitarian aid to the distressed populations in eastern Ukraine. He also had a separate telephone conversation with Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy to discuss the situations in Iraq, Libya, and Ukraine, as well as the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Edgartown, MA. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, MA.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Tisbury, MA.

In the evening, the President returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister–designate Haider al-Abadi of Iraq to congratulate him on his appointment as Prime Minister, express U.S. support for the formation of a new Government and ongoing reconciliation efforts among Iraq's sectarian communities, and discuss U.S.-Iraq security cooperation.

The President declared a major disaster in Washington and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by wildfires from July 9 through August 5.

August 12

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Edgartown, MA.

In the evening, the President returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, MA. Later, he and Mrs. Obama traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, where they remained overnight.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada to discuss the situation in Iraq, international efforts to provide humanitarian and security assistance to the civilians trapped on Mount Sinjar, operations to counter the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, and the need for continued reconciliation efforts by Iraqi political leaders from all factions to form an inclusive Government. He also had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to congratulate him on his election as President and discuss the situations in Iraq, Syria, and Gaza.

August 13

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA, to attend a birthday party for Ann Jordan at the Farm Neck Golf Club. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, MA, where they remained overnight.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to discuss the situation in Gaza and the ongoing negotiations in Cairo, Egypt, to achieve a sustainable ceasefire agreement.

The President declared a major disaster in Tennessee and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and flooding from June 5 through 10.

August 14

In the morning, at his vacation residence in Chilmark, MA, the President was briefed on the situation in Ferguson, MO, by Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Edgartown, MA.

In the evening, the President returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and President Er-

nest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone to discuss U.S. and international efforts to contain the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and express his condolences for the lives lost.

August 15

In the morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to West Tisbury, MA.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA.

In the evening, the President returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, MA, where he remained overnight.

August 16

The White House announced that the President will return to Washington, DC, on August 17.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to West Tisbury, MA. Later, they returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, MA, where they remained overnight.

August 17

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA. Later, they traveled to Edgartown, MA. Later, he and his daughter Malia returned to Washington, DC.

August 18

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the Roosevelt Room, they met with the National Security Council to discuss the situation in Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., to receive an update on the situation in Ferguson, MO.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Cape Cod, MA, on August 19.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jeanne E. Davidson to be a judge on the U.S. Court of International Trade.

The President announced his intention to nominate Haywood S. Gilliam, Jr., to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

August 19

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with economic advisers to discuss the national economy. Later, he traveled to Chilmark, MA.

The President declared a major disaster in North Dakota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding from June 25 through July 1.

August 20

The President announced his intention to appoint Patricia Welbourn Lorsch and Rusty Rueff as members of the Advisory Committee on the Arts for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Orlan Boston as a member of the Board of Governors of the United Service Organizations, Inc.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as General Trustees on the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts:

John D. Goldman;
Amalia Perea Mahoney;
Alyssa Mastromonaco; and
Reginald Van Lee.

The President announced his intention to appoint Danielle C. Gray as a member of the Council of the Administrative Conference of the United States.

The President announced his intention to appoint Barry Thom as a U.S. Commissioner of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Allan Holt as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

August 21

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark, MA.

In the evening, at their vacation residence, the President and Mrs. Obama had dinner with Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts. They remained overnight in Chilmark.

August 22

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA, where they remained overnight.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the situation in Ukraine, mutual concern over Russia's continued intervention in Ukrainian affairs, and the importance of securing a bilateral cease-fire.

August 23

In the early morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha returned to their vacation residence in Chilmark, MA. Later, he traveled to Oak Bluffs, MA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his vacation residence in Chilmark.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Charlotte, NC, on August 26.

The White House announced that the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha will return to Washington, DC, on August 24.

August 24

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughter Malia returned to Washington, DC.

August 25

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with his senior advisers.

August 26

In the morning, the President traveled to Charlotte, NC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he met with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

The White House announced that the President will award the Medal of Honor to CSM Bennie G. Adkins, USA, and posthumously to S4 Donald P. Sloat, USA, on September 15.

The President announced the designation of Jess Lippincott Baily as a member of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Recep Tayyip Erdogan as President of Turkey in Ankara, Turkey, on August 28.

August 27

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, they met with members of the President's economic team and senior advisers.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Newport, RI, on August 29.

August 28

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell. Then, he had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss the situation in Ukraine and the upcoming NATO summit in Newport, Wales. Later, in the Situation Room, he met with members of the National Security Council to discuss the situations in Iraq and Syria and U.S. strategy to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Vice President Joe Biden and several others participated via videoconference.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough, Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett, and other senior advisers.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine to the White House on September 18.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Westchester County, NY, and Newport, RI, on August 29.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael P. Botticelli to be Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Seth B. Carpenter to be Assistant Secretary for Financial Markets at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gilberto de Jesús to be Chief Counsel for Advocacy at the Small Business Administration.

The President announced his intention to nominate Russell C. Deyo to be Under Secretary for Management at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to nominate Todd A. Fisher and Deven J. Parekh to be members of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jennifer A. Haverkamp to be Assistant Secretary for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Colette Dodson Honorable to be a Commissioner on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Virginia Tyler Lodge and Ronald A. Walter to be members of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The President announced his intention to nominate Daniel H. Marti to be Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator in the Executive Office of the President.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carlos A. Monje, Jr., to be Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy at the Department of Transportation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ronald A. Pearlman to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sarah R. Saldaña to be Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carlos J. Torres to be Deputy Director of the Peace Corps.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sheila S. Gwaltney to be Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Peter M. McKinley to be Ambassador to Afghanistan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nancy Bikoff Pettit to be Ambassador to Latvia.

The President announced his intention to appoint S. Dallas Dance as a member of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board:

James S. Crown;
D. Scott Davis;
Jamie Dos Santos;
Julius M. Genachowski;
Shirley Ann Jackson; and
Neal S. Wolin.

August 29

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to New Rochelle, NY, where, at a private residence, he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable discussion. Then, he traveled to Purchase, NY. Later, he traveled to Newport, RI, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Westchester County, NY, on August 30.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Milwaukee, WI, on September 1.

August 30

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha

traveled to White Plains, NY, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Pocantico Hills, NY, where, at the Blue Hill at Stone Barns farm and restaurant, they attended the wedding of "Let's Move!" Executive Director and Senior Policy Adviser for Nutrition Policy Sam Kass.

Later in the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha returned to Washington, DC.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada to discuss the upcoming NATO summit in Newport, Wales, and the situation in Iraq.

September 1

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Milwaukee, WI. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

September 2

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Tallinn, Estonia, arriving the following morning.

September 3

In the morning, upon arrival at Tallinn Airport, the President traveled to the Swissotel Tallinn hotel. Later, at the Swissotel Tallinn, he visited with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families. Then, he traveled to the Kadriorg Palace, where he participated in an official arrival ceremony, guest book signing, and official photograph with President Toomas Hendrik Ilves of Estonia. Then, also at the Kadriorg Palace, he met with President Ilves.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the Bank of Estonia. Then, he traveled to the Stenbock House. Later, he traveled to the Kadriorg Art Museum. Then, he traveled to the Nordea Concert Hall.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to the Tallinn Airport hangar, where he and Prime Minister Taavi Roivas of Estonia received a briefing on North Atlantic Treaty Organization security reassurance in light of the situation in Ukraine.

In the evening, the President traveled to Gloucestershire, England. Upon arrival, he traveled to the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport, Wales, where he remained overnight.

September 4

In the morning, the President and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom traveled to Mount Pleasant Primary School, where they visited with staff and students. Then, they returned to the Celtic Manor Resort, where they had a meeting.

Later in the morning, at the Celtic Manor Resort, the President met with Prime Minister Cameron, President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy, and President François Hollande of France to discuss the situation in Ukraine. Secretary of State John F. Kerry also attended.

In the afternoon, also at the Celtic Manor Resort, the President was greeted by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Prime Minister Cameron and participated in an official family photograph. Then, also at the Celtic Manor Resort, he had a meeting with NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan, officials to discuss coalition progress in Afghanistan. Later, also at the Celtic Manor Resort, he met with King Abdullah II of Jordan. Secretary of State Kerry, National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, and White House Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf Region Philip H. Gordon also attended.

Later in the afternoon, also at the Celtic Manor Resort, the President joined a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission. U.S. Permanent Representative to the NATO Council Douglas E. Lute also attended.

In the evening, the President dropped by a reception hosted by Charles, Prince of Wales. Then, he traveled to Cardiff, Wales, where, at Cardiff Castle, he participated in an official family photograph with NATO leaders. Then,

also at Cardiff Castle, he had a working dinner with NATO leaders.

Later in the evening, the President returned to the Celtic Manor Resort, where he remained overnight.

September 5

In the morning, at the Celtic Manor Resort, the President viewed a fly-over ceremony of North Atlantic Treaty Organization aircraft from member nations. Then, he attended a leaders meeting on the future of NATO. Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel also attended. Later, also at the Celtic Manor Resort, he had a leaders meeting on the importance of the transatlantic alliance.

Later in the morning, also at the Celtic Manor Resort, the President met with President François Hollande of France. National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economics Caroline Atkinson, White House Senior Director for European Affairs Charles A. Kupchan, and French Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Laurent Fabius and Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian also attended.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Wiltshire, England, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, at the Stonehenge UNESCO World Heritage Site in Wiltshire, the President toured the ruins with property curator Heather Sebire. Then, he traveled to Royal Air Force Station Fairford in Gloucestershire, England. Upon arrival, he returned to Washington, DC.

September 6

In the morning, in the Cabinet Room, the President recorded an interview with Chuck Todd of NBC's "Meet the Press" program.

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with Afghan Presidential candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai to discuss efforts to form a national unity Government in Afghanistan.

September 8

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with senior advisers. Then, in the Roosevelt Room, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew. Later, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations to discuss efforts to contain the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the situations in Iraq and Ukraine, and the goals of the upcoming U.N. General Assembly, including the U.N. Climate Summit and the U.N. Security Council session on foreign terrorist fighters.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq to congratulate him on the formation of a new Iraqi Government and to discuss Iraq-U.S. relations and efforts to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia to discuss the situation in Iraq. Later, in the Old Family Dining Room, he and Vice President Biden hosted a dinner with former National Security Advisers Samuel R. "Sandy" Berger, Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Thomas E. Donilon, and Stephen J. Hadley; former Central Intelligence Agency Acting Director Michael J. Morrell; Center for a New American Security Chief Executive Officer Michèle A. Flournoy; Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Director, President, and Chief Executive Officer Jane L. Harman; Council on Foreign Relations President Richard N. Haass; and Brookings Institution President Strobe Talbott to discuss U.S. strategy to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, the situation in Ukraine, and other national security issues. They were joined by Secretary of

State John F. Kerry and other members of the President's national security team.

The White House announced that the President will award the Medal of Honor to CSM Bennie G. Adkins, USA, and posthumously to S4 Donald P. Sloat, USA, on September 15.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India to the White House on September 29 and 30.

September 9

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

In the afternoon, in the Situation Room, the President met with senior members of his national security team to discuss the Nation's security posture approaching the 13th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden met with Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell, Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner, and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi to discuss U.S. strategy to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The White House announced that the President will deliver an address to the Nation on September 10 to discuss U.S. strategy to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michele Thoren Bond to be Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael G. Young to be a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Donna L. Brazile and Maneesh K. Goyal as members of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Dorothy M. Lowman as U.S. Commissioner of the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

The President announced his intention to appoint Russell F. Smith III as U.S. Commissioner of the International Whaling Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint G.P. "Bud" Peterson and Diane L. Souvaine as members of the National Science Board for the National Science Foundation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Virgil Trujillo as a member of the Board of Directors of the Valles Caldera Trust.

September 10

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia to discuss efforts to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, the situations in Syria and Yemen, and Saudi Arabia-U.S. security cooperation. Then, in the Situation Room, he and Vice President Biden met with members of the National Security Council.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with newspaper and magazine journalists and columnists to discuss U.S. strategy to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, the situation in Ukraine, and other national security and foreign policy issues.

The President declared a major disaster in American Samoa and ordered Federal aid to supplement territory and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, flooding, and landslides from July 29 through August 3.

The President declared a major disaster in the territory of Guam and ordered Federal aid to supplement territory and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Tropical Storm Halong from July 28 through 31.

September 11

In the morning, on the South Lawn, the President and Mrs. Obama, along with Vice

President Joe Biden and his wife Jill T. Biden, participated in a moment of silence to mark the 13th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Later, he and Mrs. Obama traveled to Arlington, VA. Later, they returned to Washington, DC.

In the afternoon, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Then, in the Roosevelt Room, he dropped by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Patriarch Bechara Boutros Al Rai of the Maronite Church and other Christian religious leaders from the Middle East. During the meeting, he discussed U.S. efforts to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, the historic role of Christian communities in the region, and the importance of protecting Christians and other religious minorities throughout the Middle East. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell. Later, at the Inspired Teaching School, he and Mrs. Obama participated in a service event.

The President declared a major disaster in California and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by an earthquake from August 24 through September 7.

September 12

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with former President William J. Clinton.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Baltimore, MD, where he toured Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine with Fort McHenry Chief of Interpretation Vincent Vaise and Maryland Historical Society President Burton K. Kummerow. They were joined by Gov. Martin J. O'Malley and Lt. Gov. Anthony G. Brown of Maryland; Sens. Barbara A. Mikulski and Benjamin L. Cardin; Reps. Elijah E. Cummings, C.A. "Dutch" Ruppersberger, and John P. Sarbanes; and Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake of Baltimore.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Charlotte A. Burrows to be a Commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Isobel Coleman to be Representative of the United States to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the Rank of Ambassador, U.S. Mission to the United Nations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Benjamin L. Cardin and Ronald H. Johnson to be U.S. Representatives to the 69th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carol L. Hamilton and Leslie Berger Kiernan to be Alternate U.S. Representatives to the 69th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert M. Scher to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities.

The President declared a major disaster in Hawaii and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Tropical Storm Iselle from August 7 through 9.

September 14

The White House announced that the President will travel to Atlanta, GA, on September 16.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Tampa, FL, on September 16.

September 15

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he and the Vice President met with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Gallatin Room of the Jefferson hotel, he attended a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee event.

September 16

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with Gen. John R. Allen, USMC (Ret.), Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition To Counter ISIL, and Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition Brett H. McGurk. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with former medical director Kent P. Brantly, Samaritan's Purse Ebola Case Management Center in Monrovia, Liberia, and his wife Amber J. Brantly to discuss the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Atlanta, GA, where, in conference room 12105 at the Arlen Specter Headquarters and Emergency Operations Center of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, he received a briefing on the Ebola epidemic in West Africa and the respiratory illness affecting States in the Midwest. Then, in conference room12101, he met with Emory University Hospital physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals who provided medical care for Ebola patients. Later, he traveled to MacDill Air Force Base, FL, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, at the Welcome Center of Harbor Bay, the President participated in a reception for military spouses. Then, he traveled to the Hilton Tampa Downtown hotel in Tampa, FL, where he remained overnight.

September 17

In the morning, the President traveled to MacDill Air Force Base, where, at the U.S. Central Command Joint Intelligence Operations Center, he participated in a briefing with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel, Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command, National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco, other Central Command leaders, and representatives of the international coalition to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Then, he toured the Joint Intelligence Operations Center.

In the afternoon, at General Clarence Tinker Elementary School, the President visited with first-grade students and gave away signed boxes of White House M&M's. Then, he returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Situation Room, he met with his national security team to discuss the global terrorist threat and counterterrorism efforts.

The President announced his intention to nominate Francine Berman and Deborah Willis to be members of the National Council on the Humanities.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mario Cordero to be a Commissioner of the Federal Maritime Commission and, upon appointment, to be designated Chairman.

The President announced his intention to nominate Tho Bella Dinh-Zarr to be a member of the National Transportation Safety Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Earl L. Gay to be Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

The President announced his intention to nominate Paul A. Folmsbee to be Ambassador to Mali.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mary C. Phee to be Ambassador to South Sudan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joseph Pius Pietrzyk to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation.

September 18

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he participated in a credentialing ceremony for newly appointed Ambassadors to the U.S.: Mohammad Ziauddin of Bangladesh, Eerik Marmei of Estonia, Francisco Roberto Altschul Fuentes of El Salvador, Emanuel Arturo Gonzalez Revilla Lince of Panama, Roman Macaya Hayes of Costa Rica, Gerard Araud of France, and Igor Alberto Pangrazio Vera of Paraguay.

In the afternoon, at the Capital Hilton hotel, the President attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable.

The President announced his intention to nominate Allison Beck to be Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Brian J. Egan to be Legal Adviser at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eric P. Liu and Victoria A. Hughes to be members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dallas P. Tonsager to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Farm Credit Administration.

The President announced his intention to nominate Maria Echaveste to be Ambassador to Mexico.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard R. Verma to be Ambassador to India.

The President announced his intention to appoint David P. Abney as a member of the President's Export Council.

The President announced the nomination of Joan M. Azrack to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

The President announced the nomination of Alfred H. Bennett to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas.

The President announced the nomination of Loretta Copeland Biggs to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina.

The President announced the nomination of Elizabeth K. Dillon to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia.

The President announced the nomination of George C. Hanks, Jr., and Jose R. Olvera, Jr., to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas.

The President announced the nomination of Jill N. Parrish to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Utah.

September 19

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, the President and his daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Camp David, MD. Later, he received briefings from members of his senior staff on White House intruder Omar J. Gonzalez of Copperas Cove, TX, who was arrested by U.S. Secret Service personnel earlier in the day.

September 20

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will travel to New York City from September 23 through 25.

September 21

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with Afghan Presidential candidates Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai to congratulate them on signing an agreement to form a national unity Government and discuss Afghanistan-U.S. relations.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama returned to Washington, DC. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister John P. Key of New Zealand to congratulate him on his recent election victory and discuss New Zealand-U.S. relations.

September 22

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President visited with wounded U.S. military personnel and their families during their tour of the White House. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in a teleconference with rabbis for Rosh Hashanah. Then, also in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden, met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

In the evening, at the Naval Observatory, the President attended a Hispanic Heritage Month reception hosted by Vice President Biden and Mrs. Biden.

September 23

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to New York City. Upon arrival, he traveled to United Nations Headquarters.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the Sheraton New York Times Square Hotel. Later, he traveled to the Waldorf Astoria New York hotel, where he visited with employees of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and their families. Then, he attended a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee fundraiser at a private residence.

In the evening, the President returned to the Waldorf Astoria New York hotel, where he and Mrs. Obama attended a reception for the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. They remained overnight at the Waldorf Astoria.

September 24

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to United Nations Headquarters. Later, in the U.N. Security Council Consultations Room, he had expanded and restricted bilateral meetings with Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq. National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice also attended.

In the afternoon, at United Nations Headquarters, the President met with Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President of the 69th Session of the U.N. General Assembly. Then, also at United Nations Headquarters, he met with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

In the evening, the President returned to the Waldorf Astoria New York hotel, where he remained overnight.

September 25

In the morning, the President traveled to United Nations Headquarters.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Obama returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to discuss ways to counter the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization and commend Turkish authorities on their management of the influx of Iraqi and Syrian refugees entering Turkey.

During the day, the President met with U.S. Secret Service Director Julia A. Pierson to discuss the September 19 incident in which White House intruder Omar J. Gonzalez of Copperas Cove, TX, was arrested by U.S. Secret Service personnel.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations:

Jill Appell;
C. Fred Bergsten;
Bill Frenzel;
Leo W. Gerard;
Joseph T. Hansen;
James P. Hoffa;
Sandra Kennedy;
David H. Long;
Wade Randlett;
Matthew Rubel; and
David H. Segura.

The President announced his intention to appoint Bryan Lourd, Barbara Goodman Manilow, and Bryan Traubert as General Trustees of the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Susan J. Helms as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The President announced his intention to appoint Liza Gilbert as a member of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts.

The President declared a major disaster in Michigan and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding from August 11 through 13.

September 26

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Diplomatic Room, the President recorded an interview with Steve Kroft of CBS's "60 Minutes" program for later broadcast. Later, at a private residence, he at-

tended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser.

September 27

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Fort Belvoir, VA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

September 28

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai as President of Afghanistan in Kabul, Afghanistan, on September 29:

John D. Podesta (head of delegation);
James B. Cunningham;
John F. Campbell;
Catherine M. Russell;
Daniel Feldman;
Jeff Eggers;
Caroline Wadhams;
Larry Sampler;
Thomas J. Daley; and
Miroslav Kazimir.

September 29

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julián Castro.

In the afternoon, at the Capital Hilton hotel, the President attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable event.

In the evening, in the Blue Room, the President and Vice President Biden had dinner with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert A. Salerno to be a judge on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

September 30

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, on the National Mall, the President toured the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Thomas R. Frieden to receive an update on the recently diagnosed Ebola case in Dallas, TX, and discuss the isolation protocols under which the patient is being treated and ongoing efforts to trace the patient's contacts in order to mitigate the risk of additional cases. He also had a telephone conversation with U.S. Secret Service Director Julia A. Pierson to discuss the September 16 incident in which an armed private security guard with a criminal record boarded an elevator carrying the President during his visit to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA.

Later in the afternoon, in the Situation Room, the President met with the National Security Council to discuss the U.S. strategy to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Chicago, IL, on October 1 and Evanston, IL, on October 2.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Princeton, IN, on October 3.

The President declared a major disaster in Kentucky and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides from August 18 through 23.

October 1

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, at Joe's Seafood, Prime Steak & Stone Crab restaurant, he had dinner with Newton, MA, resident Hannah Banks and her husband Howard and New York City resident Andrea Abrahams and her guest, winners of a "Dinner With President Obama" contest sponsored

by the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

Also in the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with outgoing U.S. Secret Service Director Julia A. Pierson to discuss her earlier resignation from the agency and express his appreciation for her tenure of service.

In the evening, the President traveled to Gary, IN. Upon arrival, he traveled to Chicago, IL. Later, he traveled to his Hyde Park-Kenwood residence, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with U.S. Secret Service Acting Director Joseph P. Clancy to thank him for accepting the position following the resignation of Director Julia A. Pierson

The President announced his intention to appoint Dean C. Garfield, Harold McGraw III, and Bob Stallman as members of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

The President announced his intention to appoint Bradford J. White as a member of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lisa Borin Ogden as a member of the Board of Governors of the United Service Organizations, Inc.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sakurako Fisher as a General Trustee on the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Maura Corby Sullivan as Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The President announced his intention to appoint Naomi L. Nelson as a member of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

The President announced the appointment of Brad D. Smith as a member of the President's Advisory Council on Financial Capability for Young Americans.

The President announced the appointment of Michèle A. Flournoy and Kevin Nealer as members of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board.

October 2

In the morning, at a private resident, the President attended a campaign fundraiser for Gov. Patrick J. Quinn III of Illinois.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Evanston, IL. Later, he traveled to Gary, IN. Then, he returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Mayor Michael S. Rawlings of Dallas, TX, to discuss the local, State, and Federal response to the reported case of Ebola in Dallas and ensure that city authorities had sufficient assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to treat the patient safely and control any possible further spread of the disease.

October 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Princeton, IN. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Gen. David M. Rodriguez, USA, commander, U.S. Africa Command, to get an update on the U.S. military's response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. Upon arrival in Princeton, he traveled to Millennium Steel Service, where he and Secretary of Commerce Penny S. Pritzker toured the facility with Millennium Steel Chief Executive Officer Henry Jackson and Operations Manager Luis Garza, Jr., and visited with employees. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City and Greenwich, CT, on October 7.

October 6

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with the heads of Federal financial regulatory agencies and members of his economic team to discuss the national economy and ongoing implementation of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a bill-signing ceremony for H.R. 4994, the Improving Medicare Post-Acute Care Transformation Act of 2014.

The President declared a major disaster in New Mexico and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding from July 27 through August 5.

October 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with U.S. Secret Service Acting Director Joseph P. Clancy. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in an interview with Jeffrey Toobin of the New Yorker magazine.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to New York City, where, at a private residence, he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser. Later, he traveled to Greenwich, CT.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to the Los Angeles, CA, area on October 9.

October 8

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with President Juan Manuel Santos Calderon of Colombia to discuss the Colombian Government's efforts to resolve its conflict with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) insurgent group, Colombia's contribution of troops to United Nations peacekeeping efforts, and Colombia-U.S. security cooperation.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a teleconference call with State and local officials to discuss domestic preparedness and containment efforts in response to the West African Ebola epidemic. Later, at the Pentagon, he met with members of the National Security Council to discuss U.S. military operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

The White House announced that the President will travel to San Dimas, CA, and San Francisco, CA, on October 10.

The President announced his intention to nominate Walter A. Barrows to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sim Farar and William J. Hybl to be members of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

The President announced his intention to nominate David S. Shapira to be a Governor of the Board of Governors of the U.S. Postal Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael P. O'Rielly to be a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Denise Moreno Ducheny as a member of the Board of Directors of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission and the North American Development Bank.

The President announced his intention to appoint Kyle K. Hipsley as U.S. Commissioner of the International Boundary Commission, United States and Canada.

The President announced his intention to appoint Robert G. Stanton as a member of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jody L. Williams as a Commissioner of the Bear River Commission.

October 9

In the morning, the President traveled to Los Angeles, CA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Santa Monica, CA, where he toured the Cross Campus technology industry office facility and met with founders and employees of Noozcard Inc., Enervee Corp., and Third Place, Inc. Later, he traveled to Los Angeles, CA, where he visited the campaign headquarters of Democratic congressional candidate Ted W. Lieu. During the visit, he met with State Sen. Lieu, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Steve Israel, and campaign volunteers and staffers.

In the evening, the President traveled to the W Los Angeles-Westwood Hotel, where he remained overnight.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to the Santa Clara Pueblo by authorizing an increase in Federal funding for public assistance projects undertaken as a result of severe storms and flooding from September 13 through 16, 2013.

The President declared a major disaster in Montana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, straight-line winds, and flooding from August 21 through 25.

October 10

In the morning, in Los Angeles, CA, the President participated in a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser at a private residence.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to San Dimas, CA. Later, he traveled to San Francisco, CA.

The President announced his intention to appoint Elizabeth C. Wesman as Chair of Presidential Emergency Board No. 247.

The President announced his intention to appoint Barbara Deinhardt and David P. Twomey as members of Presidential Emergency Board No. 247.

October 11

In the morning, at a private residence, the President participated in a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser. Then, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

October 12

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President was briefed by Assistant to the President Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco on the diagnosis of the first Ebola case contracted in the U.S. at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX. Then, he had a telephone conversation with Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell to receive an update on the coordinated response to the Ebola cases in Dallas and discuss the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's investigation into infection control protocols, cooperation with State and local authorities, and implementation of Ebola containment protocols nationwide.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Bridgeport, CT, on October 15.

October 13

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to discuss efforts to contain the Ebola epidemic in West Africa and the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Then, he had a telephone conversation with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations to discuss efforts to contain the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Later, also in the Oval Office, the President met with National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco, Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Thomas R. Frieden, who participated by phone, to receive an update on the response to the first case of Ebola contracted in the U.S. at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX, efforts to ensure the readiness of the Nation's health infrastructure to contain the virus, and the investigation into infection control protocols.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Union, NJ, on October 15.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Providence, RI, on October 16.

October 14

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Joint Base Andrews, MD. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

Then, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with local high school students to discuss their education and career goals. Then, on the White House basketball court, they played an impromptu game of H–O–R–S–E. Later, in

the Oval Office, the President met with his senior advisers.

In the evening, the President traveled to McLean, VA, where, at a private residence, he participated in a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee roundtable fundraiser. Then, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Long Island, NY, on October 16.

The White House announced the cancellation of the President's planned travel to Bridgeport, CT, on October 15.

The White House announced the cancellation of the President's planned travel to Union, NJ, on October 15.

October 15

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the Situation Room, he participated in a video conference with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, President François Hollande of France, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, and Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy to discuss the international response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, the international campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, and Russia's obligations under the Minsk agreements to deescalate the situation in Ukraine.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine to discuss international obligations of the Minsk agreements to achieve a political resolution to the conflict in Ukraine.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan to discuss the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiation process, and the security situation in Northeast Asia.

The White House announced the cancellation of the President's planned travel to Providence, RI, on October 16.

The White House announced the cancellation of the President's planned travel to Long Island, NY, on October 16.

October 16

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel. Later, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven of Sweden to discuss the international response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, and efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

In the afternoon, the President had separate telephone conversations with Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner, and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi to discuss efforts to contain the Ebola virus. Then, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada to discuss the international response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa and the campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Later, also in the Oval Office, he had a teleconference call with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention employees to discuss the coordinated response to the second case of Ebola contracted in the U.S. at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX.

Also in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with Gov. John R. Kasich of Ohio to discuss precautions taken after a second Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas nurse, who had made a round trip between Dallas and Cleveland, was then diagnosed in Dallas with Ebola.

In the evening, in the Oval Office, President Obama had a telephone conversation with Gov. J. Richard Perry of Texas to discuss the availability of resources in the event of additional Ebola diagnoses among Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas employees.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Chicago, IL, on October 19.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration

of Joko "Jokowi" Widodo as President of Indonesia in Jakarta, Indonesia, on October 20:

John F. Kerry (head of delegation);
Robert O. Blake, Jr.;
Daniel R. Russel;
Carolyn Hessler-Radelet;
Scot Marciel; and
Mohamed Abdel-Kader.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michelle K. Lee to be Under Secretary for Intellectual Property at the Department of Commerce and Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dava J. Newman to be Deputy Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The President announced his intention to appoint Victoria A. Espinel as a member of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

The President announced his intention to appoint Deborah A. Phillips and Judith D. Singer as members of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nancy Rodriguez to be Director of the National Institute of Justice at the Department of Justice.

October 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, the President had a telephone conversation with President Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi of Yemen to discuss democracy efforts in Yemen and joint efforts to suppress the Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula terrorist organization. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Ronald A. Klain to discuss his appointment as Ebola Response Coordinator.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with national security and public health advisers to receive an update on the tracing of individuals who had contact with Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas nurses Nina Pham and Amber Vinson, who were treated for Ebola, and the availability of resources at State and local levels to prevent further spreading of the virus. Then, in the Situation Room, they met with the National Security Council to discuss the international campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

October 18

In the afternoon, in the Situation Room, the President met with his national security and public health teams to receive an update on domestic Ebola response and containment efforts, including Federal coordination with State and local authorities to address the Ebola cases in Dallas, TX.

Also in the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to discuss the situation in Syria, international efforts to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, and joint Turkey-U.S. efforts to foster peace and stability in Afghanistan.

October 19

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Upper Marlboro, MD.

In the evening, the President traveled to Chicago, IL. Later, he traveled to his Hyde Park-Kenwood residence, where he remained overnight.

October 20

In the morning, at theMartin Luther King Community Service Center, the President cast his early-vote ballot, greeted other voters, and chatted with volunteer campaign workers. Then, he stopped by the campaign field office of Gov. Patrick J. Quinn III of Illinois, where he visited with campaign volunteers and staffers.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his Hyde Park-Kenwood residence.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will host the White House Tribal Nations

Conference at the Capital Hilton hotel on December 3.

October 21

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with Special Assistant and Senior Director for Development and Democracy Gayle Smith and Deputy National Security Adviser Antony J. Blinken.

October 22

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia to discuss the situation in Iraq, the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, and the upcoming G–20 Summit in Brisbane, Australia.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada to express his condolences for the deaths and injuries caused by the recent attacks on Canadian Armed Forces and Government buildings in Quebec and Ottawa and offered U.S. assistance and support in countering further attacks. Prior to the call, he received an update on the shooting at the Parliament building in Ottawa from Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco.

Also during the day, the President had a telephone conversation with health care workers at Texas Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX, to thank them for their courage and perseverance in dealing with the first known cases of Ebola contracted in the U.S.

October 23

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with members of the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (PCAST). Later, at a private residence, he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jay N. Lerner to be Inspector General of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Azita Raji to be Ambassador to Sweden.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael Feuer to be a member of the National Board for Education Sciences.

The President announced his intention to nominate Herbert Block, Richard H. Weisberg, and Gary P. Zola to be members of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

October 24

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Nina Pham, a nurse at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas in Dallas, TX, who was infected with the Ebola virus while providing care to Thomas E. Duncan, but was successfully treated and cleared of the disease. Then, at the State Department, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with the National Security Council to discuss the status of the U.S. strategy to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Also at the State Department, he participated in a video teleconference with staff at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and Consulates General in both Basra and Erbil to thank them for their hard work and dedication given the security situation in Iraq and commend their important work in implementing the strategy to counter ISIL.

In the evening, the President had separate telephone conversations with Gov. Andrew M.

Cuomo of New York and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio to discuss the reported Ebola case in New York City.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Milwaukee, WI, on October 28.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the opening ceremony of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, Poland, on October 28:

Carolyn B. Maloney (head of delegation);
Stephen D. Mull;
Ira N. Forman;
Lesley L. Weiss;
Sharon A. Kershbaum; and
Shoshana M. Lew.

October 25

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Fort Belvoir, VA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

October 26

In the afternoon, the President had a meeting with Cabinet members and senior advisers to discuss Ebola preparedness and containment efforts, including measures to protect health care workers.

October 27

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with the Advanced Manufacturing Partnership Steering Committee, a working group of the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology. Later, in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, he met with Cabinet members and senior advisers to discuss lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy and general Federal preparedness efforts and climate resilience measures. Then, in the Oval Office, he visited with Alyce Dixon, the oldest living African American female veteran of World War II.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Portland, ME, on October 30.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Providence, RI, on October 30.

The White House announced that the President will award the Medal of Honor posthumously to 1st Lt. Alonzo H. Cushing, USA, in recognition of his valor during the Civil War on November 6.

October 28

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil to congratulate her on her recent reelection and discuss Brazil-U.S. relations.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, he had a teleconference with members of the U.S. Agency for International Development's Disaster Assistance Response Team coordinating the U.S. response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. Then, in the Cross Hall, he greeted the 2014 finalists of the Broadcom Math, Applied Science, Technology and Engineering Rising Stars (MASTERS) competition. Later, he traveled to Milwaukee, WI.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to the Umami Moto restaurant, where he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser.

In the evening, the President was briefed by White House Deputy Chief of Staff Anita Decker Breckenridge on the launch failure and explosion of Orbital Sciences Corp.'s Antares rocket in Wallops, VA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

October 29

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Situation Room, the President met with U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Samantha Power.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Angela Faletra Menino, wife of former Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston, MA, to express his condolences for her husband's rapidly deteriorating health.

The White House announced that the President will travel to the Detroit, MI, area on November 1.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Philadelphia, PA, on November 2.

The President declared a major disaster in New Mexico and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding from September 15 through 26.

October 30

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of State John F. Kerry. Later, he traveled to Portland, ME. Upon arrival, he traveled to Cape Elizabeth, ME, where, at a private residence, he attended a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser.

In the evening, the President traveled to Portland, ME. Later, he traveled to Warwick, RI. Upon arrival, he traveled to the Omni Providence Hotel in Providence, RI, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Thein Sein of Burma to discuss his upcoming travel to Burma for the East Asia Summit and U.S.-ASEAN Summit, the status of Burma's ongoing political and economic reforms, the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State, and Burma-U.S. relations. He also had a telephone conversation with Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma to discuss the status of Burma's ongoing democracy efforts, the upcoming 2015 elections, and Burma-U.S. relations.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Bridgeport, CT, on November 2.

October 31

In the morning, the President traveled to Rhode Island College, where he participated in a roundtable discussion on the national economy and women in the workplace with working mothers, small-business owners, and college students and faculty.

In the afternoon, the President stopped at Gregg's Restaurant and Pub, where he and Rhode Island gubernatorial candidate Gina M. Raimondo greeted owner Bob Bacon, visited with staff and patrons, and purchased lunch and dessert. Then, he returned to Washington, DC. Later, on the South Portico, he and Mrs. Obama greeted local schoolchildren and children of U.S. servicemembers trick-or-treating at the White House for Halloween.

The President announced his intention to nominate David J. Berteau to be Assistant Secretary for Logistics and Materiel Readiness at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate Leigh A. Bradley to be General Counsel at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mona Dixon to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark Scarano to be Federal Cochairperson of the Northern Border Regional Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jeffrey L. Bleich as a member of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Michael K. Goto as U.S. Commissioner of the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

The President announced his intention to appoint Mary Lou Leary as Deputy Director for State, Local, and Tribal Affairs of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

The President announced his intention to appoint A. William Ritter as U.S. Representative of the Western Interstate Nuclear Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint William Sabol as Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics at the Department of Justice.

The President declared a major disaster in Missouri and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms, tornadoes,

straight-line winds, and flooding on September 9 and 10.

November 1

In the afternoon, the President had a teleconference call with U.S. servicemembers participating in the military mission to contain the Ebola epidemic in West Africa to thank them for their service. Later, he traveled to Detroit, MI. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Manager Bruce Bochy of Major League Baseball's San Francisco Giants to congratulate him on his team's victory in the World Series.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

November 2

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Bridgeport, CT. Later, he traveled to Philadelphia, PA.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

November 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Situation Room, he met with members of his economic team and senior advisers.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Federal Reserve Chair Janet L. Yellen to discuss the national economy and implementation of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. Later, in the Doctor's Office, he recorded separate radio interviews with Frank Ski of WHUR in Washington, DC, Earl Stokes of WJMR in Milwaukee, WI, Konan of WERQ in Baltimore, MD, U.B. Rodriguez of WGCI in Chicago, IL, "No Limit" Larry Mims of WPEG in Charlotte, NC, Mildred Gaddis of WCHB in Detroit, MI, Artie Goins and Dwayne "Fly Ty" Wade of WBAV in Charlotte, NC, Mike Chandler of WFMI in Elizabeth City, NC, Brian "B-Daht" McLaughlin of WJMH in Greensboro, NC, and Larry Young of WOLB in Baltimore, MD, all for later broadcast.

The President declared a major disaster in Hawaii and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by the Pu`u `O`o volcanic eruption and lava flow beginning September 4 and continuing.

November 4

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde. Then, in the Doctor's Office, he recorded separate radio interviews with Reggie Brown of WKKV in Milwaukee, WI, Frankie Darcell of WMXD in Detroit, MI, and WDAS in Philadelphia, PA, Rick Party of WHQT in Miami, FL, and Colin McEnroe of WNPR in Hartford, CT, all for later broadcast.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel. Then, in the Roosevelt Room, they received an update from the President's national security and public health teams on Ebola response and containment efforts.

In the evening, the President had separate telephone conversations with Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi; Sens. Richard J. Durbin, Michael F. Bennet, Lindsey O. Graham, James M. Inhofe, Susan M. Collins, Edward J. Markey, Jefferson B. Sessions III, Cory A. Booker, Timothy E. Scott, Alan S. Franken, and Mark L. Pryor; Rep. Deborah Wasserman Schultz; Govs. John R. Kasich, Robert J. Bentley, and William E. Haslam; and senatorial, congressional, and gubernatorial candidates M. Michael Rounds, Shelly Moore Capito, Gary C. Peters, James Lankford, Thomas B. Cotton, Seth W. Moulton, W. Asa Hutchinson, and Thomas W. Wolf to discuss the results of the midterm elections.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew and National Economic Council Director Jeffrey D. Zients.

The White House announced that the President will travel to China, Burma, and Australia from November 10 through 16.

November 5

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with members of the U.S. Public Health Service Commission Corps stationed at the Monrovia Medical Unit in Monrovia, Liberia, to commend their efforts to treat health care workers infected with Ebola and thank them for their service. Then, also in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald and Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan D. Gibson to discuss ongoing efforts to improve health care for veterans and strengthen accountability at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President dropped by a meeting between White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett and civil rights leaders.

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner and Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell; Sens. Mark R. Warner, Jeanne C. Shaheen, and Mary L. Landrieu; Rep. Steny H. Hoyer; Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut, Gov. John W. Hickenlooper of Colorado, and Gov. Patrick J. Quinn III of Illinois; and senatorial and gubernatorial candidates Benjamin E. Sasse, Joni K. Ernst, Cory S. Gardner, Gregory W. Abbott, Charles J. Crist, Jr., Mary P. Burke, Anthony G. Brown, Paul T. Davis, and Bruce V. Rauner to discuss the results of the midterm elections.

The President declared a major disaster in Arizona and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding from September 7 through 9.

The President declared a major disaster in Nevada and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding from September 7 through 9.

November 6

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Mrs. Obama met with the U.S. Little League champion Jackie Robinson West All-Stars of Chicago, IL, to congratulate them on reaching the Little League World Series.

The President announced his intention to appoint Michael A. Strautmanis as a member of the President's Committee for People With Intellectual Disabilities.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lorna M. Johnson as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Arts for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lisa M. Caputo and Elizabeth B. Castor as members of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

November 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch with Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell, Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy; Sens. Charles E. Schumer, Patricia L. Murray, John R. Thune, John Cornyn III, and John A. Barrasso; and Reps. Steny H. Hoyer, Xavier Becerra, and Cathy McMorris Rodgers

Later in the afternoon, in the JFK Conference Room in the Situation Room, the President participated in a teleconference call with Gov. J. Richard Perry, State Health Services Commissioner David L. Lakey, and Dallas County Judge Clay L. Jenkins of Texas, and Mayor Michael S. Rawlings of Dallas, TX, to discuss the end of the 21-day waiting period for those potentially exposed to Ebola through

contact with Thomas E. Duncan, who died on October 8, or nurses Nina Pham and Amber Vinson of Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas, who treated Duncan. He thanked them for their leadership and praised the cooperation between Federal, State, and local officials as a national model for containing Ebola. Then, in the Oval Office, he recorded an interview with Bob Schieffer of CBS's "Face the Nation" program for later broadcast.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Gov. Jeremiah W. "Jay" Nixon of Missouri to discuss the situation in Ferguson, MO.

During the day, the President received an update from Department of Justice officials on the situation in Ferguson.

The President announced his intention to nominate Antony J. Blinken to be Deputy Secretary of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Adewale Adeyemo to be Assistant Secretary for International Markets and Development at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate David A. Jones to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael D. Kennedy to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, and upon appointment, to designate him as Chairman.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marisa Lago to be Deputy U.S. Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nicholas J. Rasmussen to be Director of the National Counterterrorism Center in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

November 9

Early in the morning, the President traveled to Beijing, China, arriving the following morning.

November 10

In the morning, upon arrival in Beijing, China, the President traveled to the Westin Beijing Chaoyang hotel.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, where he met with Embassy personnel and their families. Later, he met with veterans and Active Duty servicemembers to mark Veterans Day ahead of November 11. Then, he traveled to the China National Convention Center.

In the evening, the President traveled to the National Aquatics Center (Water Cube), where he was greeted by President Xi Jinping of China and his wife Peng Liyuan. Then, he participated in an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation family photograph and attended a welcome banquet. He also had a brief private conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. Later, he returned to the Westin Beijing Chaoyang hotel, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will award the Presidential Medal of Freedom on November 24.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the funeral of President Michael Chilufya Sata of Zambia in Lusaka, Zambia, on November 10: Eric T. Schultz (head of delegation); and Susan Brems.

November 11

In the morning, the President traveled to the outskirts of Beijing, where, at the Yanqi Lake International Conference Centre, he attended an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) arrival ceremony. Later, also at the Conference Centre, he participated in an APEC family photograph and tree-planting ceremony. He also had a telephone conversation with Craig A. Spencer, an American doctor who contracted Ebola while treating patients infected with the disease in Guinea, to commend his recovery and express support for health care workers serving on the frontlines of the epidemic in West Africa.

In the afternoon, at the Yanqi Lake International Conference Centre, the President had a working lunch with APEC leaders. Then, he attended the second plenary session.

In the evening, the President returned to central Beijing, where, at Zhongnanhai, he walked and talked with President Xi Jinping of China in the former imperial garden. Then, also at Zhongnanhai, in President Xi's residence, he met with President Xi and had a private dinner with him. Later, he traveled to the Westin Beijing Chaoyang hotel, where he remained overnight.

During the day, at the Yanqi Lake International Conference Centre, the President had three brief private conversations with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situations in Iran, Syria, and Ukraine.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Berlin Conference on Anti-Semitism 10th Anniversary Commemoration in Berlin, Germany, on November 13:

Samantha Power (head of delegation);
John B. Emerson;
Daniel Baer;
Melissa Rogers;
Ira N. Forman;
Deborah Lipstadt; and
Abraham H. Foxman.

November 12

In the morning, the President traveled to the Great Hall of the People, where he participated in an official arrival ceremony.

In the afternoon, in the Great Hall of the People, the President attended a state banquet. Then, also in the Great Hall of the People, he had separate meetings with Premier Li Keqiang and National People's Congress Standing Committee Chair Zhang Dejiang of China. Later, he traveled to Nay Pyi Taw, Burma, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, upon arrival in Nay Pyi Taw, the President traveled to the Kempinski Hotel Nay Pyi Taw. Later, he traveled to the Myanmar International Convention Center, where, in the lobby, he participated in an East Asia Summit family photograph. Then, he attended a gala dinner. Later, he returned to the Kempinski Hotel Nay Pyi Taw, where he remained overnight.

The President announced his intention to nominate Daniel R. Elliott III to be a member of the Surface Transportation Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lauren McGarity McFerran to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate John Mendez to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation, and upon appointment, to designate him as Chair.

The President announced his intention to nominate Antonio F. Weiss to be Under Secretary for Domestic Finance at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced the nomination of Dale A. Drozd to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California.

The President announced the nomination of LaShann Moutique DeArcy Hall to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

The President announced the nomination of Luis F. Restrepo to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

The President announced the nomination of Kara Farnandez Stoll to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

The President announced the nomination of Michael Greco to be U.S. marshal for the Southern District of New York.

November 13

In the morning, the President traveled to the Myanmar International Convention Center, where he participated in an East Asia Summit family photograph, followed by a plenary session.

In the afternoon, at the Myanmar International Convention Center, the President met with Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung of

Vietnam. Later, he traveled to the National Democratic Institute's Parliamentary Resource Center. Then, he returned to the Kempinski Hotel Nay Pyi Taw.

During the day, at the the Kempinski Hotel Nay Pyi Taw, the President greeted hotel employees and participants at a vendors' fair.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Presidential Palace. Then, he returned to the Kempinski Hotel Nay Pyi Taw, where he remained overnight.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jeffery M. Baran to be a Commissioner of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Elissa Slotkin to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs at the Department of Defense.

November 14

In the morning, the President traveled to Rangoon, Burma, where he toured the former Secretariat Building with Thant Myint-U, chairman of the Yangon Heritage Trust and special adviser to the Myanmar Peace Center, and viewed the memorial dedicated to General Aung San and six cabinet ministers who were killed on the premises on July 19, 1947. Then, he traveled to the residence of Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon, where he met with Embassy personnel and their families. Then, he met with Peace Corps Director Carolyn Hessler-Radelet and Regional Director Keri Lowry. Later, he traveled to the University of Yangon.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Royal Australian Air Force Base Amberley in Ipswich, Australia, arriving early the next morning.

The White House announced that the President will host a "ConnectED to the Future" event on November 19.

November 15

In the morning, upon arrival in Ipswich, Australia, the President traveled to the Brisbane Marriott Hotel in Brisbane, Australia. Later, he traveled to Parliament House, where he participated in a meeting with Group of Twenty (G–20) leaders.

In the afternoon, at Parliament House, the President attended a G–20 leaders' lunch. Later, he traveled to the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, where he participated in an arrival ceremony for the 2014 G–20 summit, followed by the first plenary session. Then, he participated in an official photograph with G–20 leaders.

In the evening, at the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, the President attended a G–20 reception, working dinner, and cultural program. Later, he returned to the Brisbane Marriott Hotel, where he remained overnight.

November 16

In the morning, the President traveled to the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, where he had a trilateral meeting with Prime Ministers Anthony J. Abbott of Australia and Shinzo Abe of Japan. Later, he participated in two plenary sessions for the Group of Twenty (G–20) summit.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a G–20 working lunch.

In the evening, the President traveled to Joint Base Pearl Harbor–Hickam, HI, crossing the international dateline and arriving in the morning. Then, he continued to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening. While en route aboard Air Force Once, he received a briefing from National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the killing of U.S. aid worker Abdul-Rahman Kassig by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

November 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with his senior advisers.

November 18

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, they received an update on U.S. Ebola response and containment efforts from the President's national security and public health teams.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a credentialing ceremony for newly appointed Ambassadors to the U.S.

November 19

In the evening, the President hosted a dinner for Democratic Members of Congress at the White House to discuss his executive action on immigration reform.

During the day, the President met with Minister of the National Guard Prince Mitib bin Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia to discuss Saudi Arabia-U.S. relations, international efforts to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, Saudi Arabia-Iraq relations, political stability in Yemen, the international response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, and ongoing diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran's development of nuclear weapons.

The White House announced that the President will award the 2013 National Medal of Science and National Medal of Technology and Innovation on November 20.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Las Vegas, NV, on November 21.

The President announced his intention to nominate Matthew S. Butler to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark R. Rosekind to be Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at the Department of Transportation.

The President announced the appointment of Darryl J. Madden, Kent D. Savre, and Robert M. Sussman as members of the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin.

November 20

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at We the Pizza restaurant, the President and Mrs. Obama had lunch with Standing Rock Sioux Tribe youth.

November 21

In the morning, the President traveled to Las Vegas, NV, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at Del Sol High School, the President recorded an interview with George Stephanopoulos of ABC News's "This Week" program for later broadcast. Later, he traveled to Henderson, NV, where he remained overnight.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan to discuss Pakistan-U.S. relations, regional stabilization efforts, and counterterrorism cooperation.

The White House announced that the President will hold the Thanksgiving turkey pardoning ceremony at the White House on November 26.

The White House announced that the President will travel to India in January 2015.

November 22

In the morning, the President traveled to North Las Vegas, NV.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Henderson, NV, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Chicago, IL, on November 25.

November 23

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

November 24

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with 2014 Nobel Prize laureates Eric Betzig, William E. Moerner, Shuji Nakamura, and John O'Keefe.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden

had lunch. Then, in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew.

November 25

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with his senior advisers. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., to discuss the situation in Ferguson, MO. Later, he traveled to Chicago, IL.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will host the White House Tribal Nations Conference at the Capital Hilton hotel on December 3.

The President announced his intention to appoint John P. Bilbrey as a member of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

The President announced his intention to appoint Brian Greenspun as a member of Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

The President announced his intention to appoint Andrés W. López as a General Trustee on the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Emma Sepulveda as a member of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

November 26

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the Bread for the City food pantry the President, Mrs. Obama, their daughters Malia and Sasha, and Mrs. Obama's mother Marian Robinson participated in a service event.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico to discuss President Obama's executive actions to reform the U.S. immigration system. They also discussed joint efforts to address the root causes of migration from Central America, deter the smuggling of unaccompanied children and other migrants, enhance economic competitiveness, combat organized crime, and promote regional security.

The White House announced that the President will welcome King Abdullah II of Jordan to the White House on December 5.

November 27

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with deployed U.S. servicemembers from each branch of the Armed Forces to thank them for their service and wish them a happy Thanksgiving. He also had a teleconference with U.S. servicemembers working in Liberia to contain the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

November 29

In the afternoon, at Politics and Prose Bookstore, the President and his daughters Malia and Sasha visited with patrons, purchased books, and promoted Small Business Saturday.

December 1

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew, Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson, Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert O. Work, and White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Acting Director Michael P. Botticelli to discuss Federal programs and funding that provide equipment to State and local law enforcement agencies. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with young national and local civil rights leaders.

Also in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Attorney General Holder met with Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey of Philadelphia, PA, and George Mason University Professor of Criminology, Law, and Society Laurie Robinson, Cochairs of a Presiden-

tial task force on strengthening relations between law enforcement and local communities.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Donald Tusk of the European Council to congratulate him on his first day in office and discuss European Union-U.S. relations, ongoing negotiations regarding the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement, the situation in Ukraine, international sanctions against Russia, and the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

The White House announced that the President will deliver remarks at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD, on December 2.

The White House announced that the President, Vice President Biden, and Mrs. Obama will host the College Opportunity Day of Action at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center on December 4.

December 2

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with 12 tribal leaders from around the Nation to discuss issues of importance to Indian Country ahead of the Tribal Nations Conference. Then, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden met with Secretary of Defense Charles T. Hagel.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Bethesda, MD, where, at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, he met with wounded U.S. military personnel and their families. Later, at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, he toured the Vaccine Research Center with Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell, National Institutes of Health Director Francis S. Collins, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony S. Fauci, and Biodefense Research Section Chief Nancy Sullivan. During the tour, he met with scientists conducting Ebola vaccine and treatment research. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, at the St. Regis Washington, D.C. Hotel, the President participated in a Democratic National Committee roundtable fundraiser.

December 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Then, in the Oval Office, he met with Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell. Then, he had a telephone conversation with Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., to discuss the grand jury decision regarding the death of Eric Garner, who died during an attempted arrest by New York City police officers on July 17. Also in the Oval Office, he met with White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett, White House Counsel W. Neil Eggleston, Communications Director Jennifer Palmieri, and Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest to discuss the grand jury decision. Later, in the Cabinet Room, he and Vice President Biden met with military leadership and combatant commanders.

Also in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In the evening, at the Blair House, the President hosted a dinner for military leadership, combatant commanders, and their spouses. Mrs. Obama, Vice President Biden, and his wife Jill T. Biden also attended.

December 4

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York City to discuss the grand jury decision in the death of Eric Garner, who died during an attempted arrest by New York City police officers on July 17. The President praised Mayor de Blasio's leadership, commended New Yorkers for their peaceful and constructive response to the decision, and pledged to work with the mayor to strengthen relations between law enforcement and local communities nationwide.

The White House announced that the President will host the White House Summit on Early Education on December 10.

The President announced his intention to appoint Gilbert Cisneros as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Arts for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Brodi L. Fontenot as Assistant Secretary for Management at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to appoint W. Don Nelson as U.S. Representative to the Kansas-Nebraska Big Blue River Compact Administration.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nathalie Rayes as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The President announced his intention to appoint Daniel Rosen as a member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint James T. Rizzuto as Federal Representative to the Arkansas River Compact Administration.

The President announced his intention to appoint Edward Weissman as U.S. Commissioner of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

December 5

During the day, in the Cabinet Room, the President recorded an interview with Jeffrey I. Johnson of BET News for later broadcast. Also during the day, in the Oval Office, he greeted King Abdullah II of Jordan and his son Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, a student at Georgetown University.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, of the United Kingdom to the White House on December 8.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Nashville, TN, on December 9.

December 6

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Bethesda, MD, where, at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, he had a fiberoptic laryngoscopy and CT scan of his throat.

December 8

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President met with Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, of the United Kingdom, to thank him for the Royal Family's hospitality during his recent visits to the United Kingdom and discuss United Kingdom-U.S. relations. Later, in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, he and Vice President Joe Biden met with middle school students from Newark, NJ, and Brooklyn, NY, who were participating in an "Hour of Code" event to publicize the start of Computer Science Education Week.

In the afternoon, in the Lisner Auditorium at George Washington University, the President recorded an interview before a live audience with Stephen T. Colbert for Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report" program for later broadcast.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz of Poland to discuss the situation in Ukraine and thank him for Poland's contributions to U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

December 9

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Nashville, TN, where, in the Global Education Center dance studio at Casa Azafrán, he recorded separate interviews with José Díaz-Balart of MSNBC's "The Rundown With José Díaz-Balart" program and Jorge Ramos of the Fusion Media Network's "AMERICA With Jorge Ramos" program for later broadcast. Then, at La Hacienda Taqueria, he purchased lunch and visited with owners Carlos and Lillian Yepez, employees, and patrons.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

During the day, the President participated in a video conference with President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah of Afghanistan to discuss the drawdown of the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan, the transition of coalition forces to the Resolute Support mission, ongoing support and training for the Afghan National Security Forces, and U.S. and regional support

for the Afghan-led peace process. He also praised their successful ministerial conferences in Belgium and the United Kingdom and the ratification of the bilateral security and NATO status of forces agreements.

The White House announced that the President will host the White House Summit on Early Childhood Education in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Building on December 10.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the World War II Battle of the Bulge 70th Anniversary Commemoration Events in Bastogne, Belgium, on December 13:

Thomas R. Nides (head of delegation);
Denise Campbell Bauer;
Brad R. Carson;
Philip M. Breedlove;
Montgomery C. Meigs; and
Thomas J. Brokaw.

December 10

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch.

December 11

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing with Director of the Central Intelligence Agency John O. Brennan.

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President participated in a photo opportunity with the fall class of White House interns.

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with Democratic Members of Congress to facilitate passage of continuing appropriations legislation. Also during the day, in the Oval Office, he met with U.S. Ambassador to India Richard R. Verma and, in the Diplomatic Reception Room, greeted the Patt Holt Singers during a private holiday reception performance.

December 12

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, he participated in a live telephone interview with Colin Cowherd of ESPN Radio's "The Herd" program. He also recorded separate telephone interviews with Brian Dawson of WQOK's "Afternoon Traffic Jam" program in Raleigh, NC, and Ryan Seacrest of KIIS's "On Air" program in Los Angeles, CA, both for later broadcast, to promote health care enrollment under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Later, also in the Oval Office, the President met with Minister of Interior Prince Muhammad bin Nayif bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia to discuss counterterrorism efforts and regional security issues, including the threat posed by the Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organizations, the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, support for the new Yemeni Government, and the situation in Iran.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President greeted members of the Four Tops and the Temptations.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico to the White House on January 6, 2015.

December 13

The White House announced that the President will travel to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ, on December 15.

December 15

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

December 16

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, they met with Joseph E. Kurtz, Archbishop of Louisville, KY, and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Situation Room, they met with the National Security Council to review potential threats to the U.S. homeland and U.S. personnel overseas during the upcoming holidays, receive an update on security preparations throughout the country, discuss efforts to monitor the potential for violent reactions overseas to the release of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's report on the Central Intelligence Agency's former detention and interrogation programs, and examine the U.S. security posture in Pakistan following the terrorist attack at the Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan to congratulate him on his party's victory in the December 14 parliamentary elections and discuss Japan-U.S. relations. He also had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia to offer his condolences for the victims of the December 15 hostage crisis at Lindt Chocolate Cafe in Sydney and reiterate U.S. readiness to provide assistance.

Also, in the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan to offer his condolences for the December 16 terrorist attack at an Army Public School in Peshawar, Pakistan.

December 17

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President recorded an interview with David Muir of ABC News' "World News" program for later broadcast.

December 18

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with his senior advisers.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Abdelfattah Said Elsisi of Egypt to discuss Egypt-U.S. relations, regional issues, and the importance of continued joint counterterrorism efforts. He also had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq to discuss the political and security situation in Iraq, reiterate the U.S. commitment to train and assist the Iraqi security forces in their effort to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, and commend the Prime Minister's efforts to create an inclusive Government and build a united Iraqi front to fight against ISIL.

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles H. Ramsey and Laurie Robinson as Cochairs of the President's Task Force on 21st-Century Policing.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Task Force on 21st-Century Policing:

Cedric L. Alexander;
Jose Lopez;
Tracey Meares;
Brittany Packnett;
Susan Rahr;
Constance Rice;
Sean Smoot;
Bryan Stevenson; and
Roberto Villasenor.

December 19

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Honolulu, HI. Upon arrival at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, they traveled to their vacation residence in Kailua, HI.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Dilma Rousseff as President of Brazil in Brasilia, Brazil, on January 1, 2015:

Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (head of delegation);
Liliana Ayalde;
Roberta S. Jacobson; and
Ricardo Zuniga.

December 20

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI.

During the day, the President received a briefing on the murder of New York City Police Officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael L. Ramos in Brooklyn.

December 21

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton to express condolences for the December 20 murder of New York City Police Officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael L. Ramos in Brooklyn and offer Federal assistance. Later, he traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Bellows Air Force Station in Waimanalo, HI. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI.

Also in the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey, in his capacity as Cochair of the President's Task Force on 21st-Century Policing, to discuss the December 20 murder of New York City Police Officers Liu and Ramos, offer Federal assistance, reiterate his respect for the service and dedication of law enforcement officers, and express his support for Commissioner Ramsey's continued public calls condemning violence.

In the evening, the President traveled to Waikiki, HI. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua.

December 22

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sally Quillian Yates to be Deputy Attorney General.

The President announced his intention to appoint Dawn Halfaker as a member of the Board of Governors of United Service Organizations, Inc.

The President announced his intention to appoint Mary Minow as a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board.

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe winter storm, snowstorm, and flooding from November 17 through 26.

December 23

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI. Then, he traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his vacation residence in Kailua. Later, he and his daughter Malia traveled to the Makapu'u Point Lighthouse Trail in southeastern Oahu. Then, they returned to their vacation residence in Kailua.

During the day, the President was briefed on the hospitalization of former President George H.W. Bush.

December 24

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI. Then, he traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, where he played golf with Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia. He and Prime Minister Najib also discussed Malaysia-U.S. relations and Malaysia's upcoming chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his vacation residence in Kailua.

In the evening, the President had separate telephone conversations with deployed U.S. servicemembers from each branch of the Armed Forces to thank them for their service and dedication.

December 25

In the morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled

to Bellows Air Force Station in Waimanalo, HI, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha returned to their vacation residence in Kailua, HI. Later, he and Mrs. Obama traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama returned to their vacation residence in Kailua.

December 26

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Then, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI. Later, he, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Bellows Air Force Station in Waimanalo, HI.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the Royal Hawaiian Golf Club in Kailua. Later, he returned to his vacation residence.

December 27

In the morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Bellows Air Force Station in Waimanalo, HI.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI. Later, he and Mrs. Obama traveled to Honolulu, HI, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama returned to their vacation residence in Kailua.

During the day, the President received a briefing on the crash of AirAsia Flight 8501 in the Java Sea.

December 28

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI.

Also in the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julián Castro to congratulate him and his wife Erica on the birth of their son Cristian Julián Castro.

December 29

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Then, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI. Later, he, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Bellows Air Force Station in Waimanalo, HI.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the Mid-Pacific Country Club in Kailua.

In the evening, the President returned to his vacation residence.

December 30

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Then, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI.

In the afternoon, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Waialua, HI.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha returned to their vacation residence in Kailua.

December 31

In the morning, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Then, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua, HI.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay. Later, he returned to his vacation residence in Kailua.

Appendix B—Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted July 7

Robert Alan McDonald,
of Ohio, to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs, vice Eric K. Shinseki, resigned.

Submitted July 9

Jess Lippincott Baily,
of Ohio, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Macedonia.

Judith Beth Cefkin,
of Colorado, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of the Fiji Islands, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu.

Robert Francis Cekuta,
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Stafford Fitzgerald Haney,
of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Costa Rica.

Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall,
of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Energy, vice Daniel B. Poneman.

Michele Jeanne Sison,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be the Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Deputy Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Michele Jeanne Sison,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during her tenure of service as Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

Margaret Ann Uyehara,
of Ohio, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Montenegro.

James Peter Zumwalt,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Senegal, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Withdrawn July 9

Elizabeth M. Robinson,
of Washington, to be Under Secretary of Energy, vice Kristina M. Johnson, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 2014.

Submitted July 14

Craig B. Allen,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Brunei Darussalam.

Sharon Block,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of 5 years expiring December 16, 2019, vice Nancy Jean Schiffer, term expiring.

Jane D. Hartley,
of New York, to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Monaco.

Richard M. Mills, Jr.,
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Armenia.

Joseph L. Nimmich,
of Maryland, to be Deputy Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, vice Richard Serino, resigned.

Anne E. Rung,
of Pennsylvania, to be Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy, vice Joseph G. Jordan, resigned.

Alissa M. Starzak,
of New York, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Army, vice Brad Carson, resigned.

John Francis Tefft,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Russian Federation.

Submitted July 17

Charles C. Adams, Jr.,
of Maryland, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Finland.

Matthew Vincent Masterson,
of Ohio, to be a member of the Election Assistance Commission for a term expiring December 12, 2017, vice Gineen Bresso Beach, term expired.

Christy A. McCormick,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Election Assistance Commission for a term expiring December 12, 2015, vice Donetta Davidson, term expired.

Submitted July 21

Mickey D. Barnett,
of New Mexico, to be a Governor of the U.S. Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2020 (reappointment).

Charles H. Fulghum,
of North Carolina, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security, vice Margaret Ann Sherry, resigned.

James L. Huffman,
of Oregon, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2014, vice Michael Butler, term expired.

James L. Huffman,
of Oregon, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2020 (reappointment).

Adri Davin Jayaratne,
of Michigan, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor, vice Brian Vincent Kennedy.

Barbara A. Leaf,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the United Arab Emirates.

Virginia E. Palmer,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Malawi.

William V. Roebuck,
of North Carolina, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Submitted July 22

Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri,
of Arizona, to be Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission for the term of 3 years, vice Tracie Stevens.

Submitted July 23

Jeffery Martin Baran,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2015, vice William D. Magwood, IV, resigning.

Stephen G. Burns,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of 5 years expiring June 30, 2019, vice George Apostolakis, term expired.

Submitted July 28

Thomas Frieden,
of New York, to be Representative of the United States on the Executive Board of the World Health Organization, vice Nils Maarten Parin Daulaire, resigned.

Perry L. Holloway,
of South Carolina, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Willie E. May,
of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology, vice Patrick Gallagher, resigned.

Therese W. McMillan,
of California, to be Federal Transit Administrator, vice Peter M. Rogoff.

Pamela Leora Spratlen,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Submitted July 29

David Nathan Saperstein,
of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, vice Suzan D. Johnson Cook.

Submitted July 31

Allison Dale Burroughs,
of Massachusetts, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, vice Rya W. Zobel, retired.

Amit Priyavadan Mehta,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, vice Ellen Segal Huvelle, retired.

Manson K. Brown,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, vice Kathryn D. Sullivan, resigned.

Carmen Amalia Corrales,
of New Jersey, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation for a term expiring December 17, 2015, vice Matthew Maxwell Taylor Kennedy, term expired.

Rafael J. López,
of Maryland, to be Commissioner on Children, Youth, and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, vice Bryan Hayes Samuels, resigned.

Mari Carmen Aponte,
of the District of Columbia, to be Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the Organization of American States, with the rank of Ambassador.

Andrew LaMont Eanes,
of Kansas, to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security for the term expiring January 19, 2019, vice Carolyn W. Colvin, term expired.

Brodi L. Fontenot,
of Louisiana, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of the Treasury, vice Daniel M. Tangherlini, resigned.

Mary Lucille Jordan,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission for a term of 6 years expiring August 30, 2020 (reappointment).

P. David Lopez,
of Arizona, to be General Counsel of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Lourdes Maria Castro Ramírez,
of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, vice Sandra Brooks Henriquez.

Robert T. Yamate,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Madagascar, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Union of the Comoros.

Submitted August 5

Jorge Luis Alonso,
of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, vice Ronald A. Guzman, retiring.

John Robert Blakey,
of Illinois, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, vice James Holderman, retired.

Submitted September 8

Michael P. Botticelli,
of the District of Columbia, to be Director of National Drug Control Policy, vice R. Gil Kerlikowske, resigned.

Seth B. Carpenter,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, vice Matthew S. Rutherford.

Gilberto de Jesus,
of Maryland, to be Chief Counsel for Advocacy, Small Business Administration, vice Winslow Lorenzo Sargeant.

Russell C. Deyo,
of New Jersey, to be Under Secretary for Management, Department of Homeland Security, vice Rafael Borras, resigned.

Sheila Gwaltney,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kyrgyz Republic.

Jennifer Ann Haverkamp,
of Indiana, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, vice Kerri-Ann Jones, resigned.

Todd A. Fisher,
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation for a term expiring December 17, 2016, vice James A. Torrey, term expired.

Colette Dodson Honorable,
of Arkansas, to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30, 2017, vice John Robert Norris, resigned.

Virginia Tyler Lodge,
of Tennessee, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2019, vice William B. Sansom, term expired.

Daniel Henry Marti,
of Virginia, to be Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, Executive Office of the President, vice Victoria Angelica Espinel, resigned.

Peter Michael McKinley,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Carlos A. Monje, Jr.,
of Louisiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation, vice Polly Trottenberg, resigned.

Deven J. Parekh,
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation for a term expiring December 17, 2016, vice Katherine M. Gehl, resigned.

Ronald Alan Pearlman,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 14, 2015, vice Nancy Killefer, term expired.

Nancy Bikoff Pettit,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Latvia.

Sarah R. Saldaña,
of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security, vice John Morton, resigned.

Carlos J. Torres,
of Virginia, to be Deputy Director of the Peace Corps, vice Carolyn Hessler Radelet, resigned.

Ronald Anderson Walter,
of Tennessee, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2019, vice Barbara Short Haskew, term expired.

Jeanne E. Davidson,
of Maryland, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of International Trade, vice Donald C. Pogue, retired.

Haywood Stirling Gilliam, Jr.,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California, vice Claudia Wilken, retiring.

Withdrawn September 8

Annette Taddeo-Goldstein,
of Florida, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2018, vice John P. Salazar, term expired, which was sent to the Senate on February 27, 2014.

Submitted September 10

Michele Thoren Bond,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Consular Affairs), vice Janice L. Jacobs, resigned.

Michael Young,
of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission for a term of 6 years expiring August 30, 2020 (reappointment).

Submitted September 15

Charlotte A. Burrows,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2019, vice Jacqueline A. Berrien, resigned.

Benjamin L. Cardin,
of Maryland, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the 69th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Isobel Coleman,
of New York, to be Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador.

Isobel Coleman,
of New York, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform.

Carol Leslie Hamilton,
of California, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the 69th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Ronald H. Johnson,
of Wisconsin, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the 69th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Leslie Berger Kiernan,
of Maryland, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the 69th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Robert M. Scher,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Madelyn R. Creedon, resigned.

Withdrawn September 15

Debo P. Adegbile,
of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Thomas E. Perez, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 2014.

Submitted September 18

Allison Beck,
of the District of Columbia, to be Federal Mediation and Conciliation Director, vice George H. Cohen, resigned.

Francine Berman,
of New York, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2020, vice Gary D. Glenn, term expired.

Mario Cordero,
of California, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for the term expiring June 30, 2019 (reappointment).

Tho Dinh-Zarr,
of Texas, to be a member of the National Transportation Safety Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2018, vice Deborah Hersman, resigned.

Maria Echaveste,
of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the United Mexican States.

Brian James Egan,
of Maryland, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State, vice Harold Hongju Koh, resigned.

Paul A. Folmsbee,
of Oklahoma, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Mali.

Earl L. Gay,
of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management, vice Christine M. Griffin.

Victoria Ann Hughes,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2016, vice James Palmer, term expired.

Eric P. Liu,
of Washington, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring December 27, 2017, vice Layshae Ward, term expired.

Mary Catherine Phee,
of Illinois, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of South Sudan.

Joseph Pius Pietrzyk,
of Ohio, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation for a term expiring July 13, 2017 (reappointment).

Dallas P. Tonsager,
of South Dakota, to be a member of the Farm Credit Administration Board, Farm Credit Administration, for a term expiring May 21, 2020, vice Jill Long Thompson, term expired.

Richard Rahul Verma,
of Maryland, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of India.

Deborah Willis,
of New York, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2020, vice Carol M. Swain, term expired.

Joan Marie Azrack,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, vice Joanna Seybert, retired.

Alfred H. Bennett,
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, vice Kenneth M. Hoyt, retired.

Loretta Copeland Biggs,
of North Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of North Carolina, vice James A. Beaty, Jr., retired.

Elizabeth K. Dillon,
of Virginia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Virginia, vice Samuel Grayson Wilson, retired.

George C. Hanks, Jr.,
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, vice Nancy Friedman Atlas, retired.

Jose Rolando Olvera, Jr.,
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, vice Hilda G. Tagle, retired.

Jill N. Parrish,
of Utah, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Utah, vice Dee V. Benson, retired.

Withdrawn September 18

Rhea Sun Suh,
of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, vice Thomas Thomas L. Strickland, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 2014.

Alison Renee Lee,
of South Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of South Carolina, vice Cameron M. Currie, retiring, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 2014.

Submitted November 12

Leon Aron,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2016, vice S. Enders Wimbush, resigned.

Walter A. Barrows,
of Ohio, to be a member of the Railroad Retirement Board for a term expiring August 28, 2019 (reappointment).

David J. Berteau,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Alan F. Estevez, resigned.

Leigh A. Bradley,
of Virginia, to be General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, vice Will A. Gunn, resigned.

Romonia S. Dixon,
of Arizona, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2018, vice Matthew Francis McCabe, term expired.

Sim Farar,
of California, to be a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2015 (reappointment).

Sim Farar,
of California, to be a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2018 (reappointment).

Jeffery S. Hall,
of Kentucky, to be a member of the Farm Credit Administration Board, Farm Credit Administration, for a term expiring October 13, 2018, vice Leland A. Strom, term expired.

William Joseph Hybl,
of Colorado, to be a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2015 (reappointment).

Michelle K. Lee,
of California, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, vice David J. Kappos, resigned.

Jay Neal Lerner,
of Illinois, to be Inspector General, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, vice Jon T. Rymer, resigned.

Dava J. Newman,
of Massachusetts, to be Deputy Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, vice Lori Garver, resigned.

Michael P. O'Rielly,
of New York, to be a member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of 5 years from July 1, 2014 (reappointment).

Azita Raji,
of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Sweden.

Robert A. Salerno,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Robert Isaac Richter, retired.

Mark Scarano,
of New Hampshire, to be Federal Cochairperson of the Northern Border Regional Commission, vice Sandford Blitz, resigning.

David S. Shapira,
of Pennsylvania, to be a Governor of the U.S. Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2019, vice Dennis J. Toner, term expired.

Adewale Adeyemo,
of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, vice Marisa Lago.

Antony Blinken,
of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of State, vice William J. Burns, resigned.

Daniel R. Elliott, III,
of Ohio, to be a member of the Surface Transportation Board for a term expiring December 31, 2018 (reappointment).

David Avren Jones,
of Connecticut, to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring October 11, 2018 (reappointment).

Michael D. Kennedy,
of Georgia, to be a member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring September 25, 2018 (reappointment).

Marisa Lago,
of New York, to be a Deputy U.S. Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, vice Miriam E. Sapiro, resigned.

Lauren McGarity McFerran,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of 5 years expiring December 16, 2019, vice Nancy Jean Schiffer, term expiring.

Nicholas J. Rasmussen,
of Virginia, to be Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, vice Matthew G. Olsen, resigned.

Antonio F. Weiss,
of New York, to be an Under Secretary of the Treasury, vice Mary John Miller.

Dale A. Drozd,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of California, vice Anthony W. Ishii, retired.

Michael Greco,
of New York, to be U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of New York for the term of 4 years, vice Joseph R. Guccione, term expired.

LaShann Moutique DeArcy Hall,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, vice Nicholas G. Garaufis, retired.

Luis Felipe Restrepo,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, vice Anthony J. Scirica, retired.

Kara Farnandez Stoll,
of Virginia, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit, vice Randall R. Rader, retired.

Withdrawn November 12

Michael G. Carroll,
of New York, to be Inspector General, U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Donald A. Gambatesa, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 2014.

Jo Ann Rooney,
of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary of the Navy, vice Robert O. Work, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 2014.

Sharon Block,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of 5 years expiring December 16, 2019, vice Nancy Jean Schiffer, term expiring, which was sent to the Senate on July 14, 2014.

Submitted November 13

Jeffery Martin Baran,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring June 30,2018, vice Allison M. Macfarlane, resigning.

Loretta E. Lynch,
of New York, to be Attorney General, vice Eric H. Holder, Jr.

John E. Mendez,
of California, to be a Director of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation for a term expiring December 31, 2015, vice Sharon Y. Bowen, resigned.

Elissa Slotkin,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Derek H. Chollet.

Submitted November 19

Matthew Stuart Butler,
of Ohio, to be a member of the Election Assistance Commission for a term expiring December 12, 2015, vice Rosemary E. Rodriguez, term expired.

Mark R. Rosekind,
of California, to be Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, vice David L. Strickland, resigned.

Withdrawn November 19

Myrna Perez,
of Texas, to be a member of the Election Assistance Commission for a term expiring December 12, 2015, vice Rosemary E. Rodriguez, term expired, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 2014.

Submitted November 20

Ann Donnelly,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, vice Sandra L. Townes, retiring.

Roseann A. Ketchmark,
of Missouri, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Missouri, vice Gary A. Fenner, retiring.

Travis Randall McDonough,
of Tennessee, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee, vice Curtis L. Collier, retired.

Appendix C—Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released July 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Released July 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Report: Missed Opportunities and the Consequences of State Decisions Not To Expand Medicaid

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: Missed Opportunities: Consequences of State Decisions Not To Expand Medicaid

Released July 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in June

Released July 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 1681

Released July 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: Factsheet on the Democratic Republic of the Congo Executive Order

Text of a White House blog post by Assistant to the President and Senior Adviser H. Daniel Pfeiffer: From Denver to Austin: "The Bear Is Loose" Again

Fact sheet: Emergency Supplemental Request To Address the Increase in Child and Adult Migration From Central America in the Rio Grande Valley Areas of the Southwest Border

Advance text of remarks by White House Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf Region Philip H. Gordon at the Haaretz Israel Conference on Peace in Tel Aviv, Israel

Released July 9

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Presidential election in Indonesia

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the 10th anniversary of the murder of U.S. journalist Paul Klebnikov in Moscow, Russia

Released July 10

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on House of Representatives action on legislation to grant the Speaker of the House of Representatives authority to initiate litigation against the President

Text of a background statement by a White House official on the release of a White House progress report on the President's "year of action"

White House report: Year of Action: An Update on What President Obama Has Done This Year To Help Ensure Opportunity for All Americans

Released July 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Announces New Partnership With the Private Sector To Strengthen America's Small Businesses; Renews the Federal Government's QuickPay Initiative: 26 Companies Committed to SupplierPay Initiative

Released July 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Report: Economic Analysis of Transportation Infrastructure Investment

Statement by the Press Secretary: Expected Attendees at the White House Iftar Dinner

Text of a National Economic Council and Council of Economic Advisers report: An Economic Analysis of Transportation Infrastructure Investment

Released July 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: Progress in Four Years of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy

Released July 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a teleconference background briefing by senior administration officials on the announcement of additional economic sanctions against Russia in response to its actions in Ukraine

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2388

Fact sheet: Taking Action To Support State, Local, and Tribal Leaders as They Prepare Communities for the Impacts of Climate Change

Released July 17

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in Ukraine

Fact sheet: Building a 21st Century Infrastructure: Increasing Public and Private Collaboration With the *Build America Investment Initiative*

Released July 18

Statement by the Press Secretary on the extension of negotiations to prevent Iran's development of nuclear weapons

Statement by Secretary of State John F. Kerry: Extension of Iran Nuclear Talks (released by the Department of State)

Released July 19

Transcript of a July 18 background briefing by senior administration officials on ongoing diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran's development of nuclear weapons (released by the Department of State)

Released July 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Labour Party Leader and Leader of the Opposition Edward S. Miliband of the United Kingdom

Fact sheet: Taking Action To Support LGBT Workplace Equality Is Good for Business

Fact sheet: President Obama Applauds New Commitments in Support of the My Brother's Keeper Initiative

Released July 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on U.S. circuit court rulings in the *King* v. *Burwell* and *Halbig* v. *Burwell* cases

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 803

White House report by Vice President Joe Biden: Ready To Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity

Text of a readout of White House Chief of Staff Denis R. McDonough's meetings with

Chief of Staff Peter Altmaier of Germany in Berlin, Germany

Text of a readout of a teleconference call between senior administration officials and Governors to discuss the Federal response to the humanitarian situation on the Mexico-U.S. border

Fact sheet: Ready To Work at a Glance: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity

Fact sheet: Ready To Work: New Actions To Expand Job-Driven Training and Broaden the Pathway to the Middle Class

Released July 23

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz

Text of a Department of State press release: Media Note: Summary of Understandings Related to the Implementation and Extension of the Joint Plan of Action (released by the Department of State on July 22)

Fact sheet: Increasing Investment in Rural America (embargoed until July 24)

Released July 24

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on Meriam Yahya Ibrahim Ishag's departure from Sudan

Released July 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 255, H.R. 272, H.R. 291, H.R.330, H.R.356, H.R. 507, H.R. 697, H.R 876, H.R. 1158, H.R. 1216, H.R. 1376, H.R. 1813, H.R. 2337, and H.R. 3110

Fact sheet: Visit of President Perez Molina of Guatemala, President Hernandez of Honduras, and President Sanchez Ceren of El Salvador

July 26

Statement by Deputy National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the crash of Air Algerie Flight 5071

July 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Deputy National Security Adviser Antony J. Blinken

Text of a background statement by a White House official on the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Presidential Summit town hall meeting

Transcript of remarks by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice to the National Leadership Assembly for Israel at the National Press Club

Fact sheet: The President's Young Africa Leaders Initiative (YALI)

Fact sheet: The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders

July 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a background teleconference call by senior administration officials on the situation in Ukraine

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Report: The Cost of Delaying Action To Stem Climate Change

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Announces New Executive Secretary/Chief of Staff for the National Security Council Staff

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: The Cost of Delaying Action To Stem Climate Change

Fact sheet: Empowering America's Agricultural Sector and Strengthening Food Resilience Through the President's Climate Data Initiative

July 30

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Director Jason L. Furman on the advance estimate of GDP for the second quarter of 2014

Transcript of remarks by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice at the U.S. Institute of Peace: Africa and America: Partners in a Shared Future

July 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on a House of Representatives proposal to block expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program

Statement by the Press Secretary on the announcement of a humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza

Text of a joint statement by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations and Secretary of State John F. Kerry announcing a humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza (released by the Department of State)

Text of a readout of Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes's meeting with Iraqi Chaldean and Assyrian community leaders

Fact sheet: Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces Executive Order

Transcript of remarks by Secretary of State John F. Kerry on the announcement of a humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza from New Delhi, India (released by the Department of State)

August 1

Transcript of a July 31 on-the-record teleconference call by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield, and National Security Council Senior Director for Development and Democracy Gayle E. Smith on the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit

Statement by the Press Secretary: The Obama Administration's Government-Wide Response to Influx of Central American Migrants at the Southwest Border

Statement by the Press Secretary on House of Representatives passage of immigration reform legislation

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1528 and S. 517

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Director Jason L Furman on the employment situation in July

Statement by Deputy National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the 70th anniversary of the massacre of Roma and Sinti people at Auschwitz-Birkenau

Statement by Deputy National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes and National Security Adviser to the Vice President Jacob Sullivan's meeting with the Syrian defector "Caesar"

Text of a statement by Secretary of State John F. Kerry on the situation in Gaza (released by the Department of State)

August 3

Statement by National Security Council Deputy Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the earthquake in southwestern China

August 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and former Press Secretaries James F. "Jay" Carney, Robert L. Gibbs, Dana M. Perino, Scott McClellan, Ari Fleischer, Richard L. "Jake" Siewert, Jr., Joseph Lockhart, Michael D. McCurry, Dee Dee Myers, Marlin Fitzwater, and Ronald H. Nessen on the death of former Press Secretary James S. Brady

Statement by the Press Secretary on H.J. Res. 76

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 76

Text of a readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani of Libya

Fact sheet: Shared Investment in Youth

Fact sheet: U.S.-African Cooperation in Advancing Gender Equality

Fact sheet: U.S.-African Cooperation on Global Health

Fact sheet: U.S. Engagement on Climate Change and Resilience in Africa

Fact sheet: U.S.-African Cooperation on Food Security

Fact sheet: Investing in African Trade for Our Common Future

Fact sheet: U.S. Support for Democratic Institutions, Good Governance, and Human Rights in Africa

Fact sheet: U.S. Support for Combating Wildlife Trafficking

August 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam of Mauritius

Fact sheet: The Doing Business in Africa Campaign

Fact sheet: Powering Africa: Increasing Access to Power in Sub-Saharan Africa

August 6

Text of a statement by the chair of the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit

Fact sheet: U.S. Support for Peacekeeping in Africa

Fact sheet: Security Governance Initiative

Fact sheet: Partnering To Counter Terrorism in Africa

August 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a background briefing by senior administration officials on the situation in Iraq

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3230

Text of a statement by Secretary of State John F. Kerry on the situation in Iraq (released by the Department of State)

August 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 606, H.R. 1671, H.R. 2291, H.R. 3212, H.R. 3472, H.R. 3548, H.R. 3765, H.R. 4028, H.R. 4360, H.R. 4386, H.R. 4631, H.R. 4838, H.R. 5021, H.R. 5195, S. 653, S. 1104, and S. 1799

Statement by Deputy National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes's meeting with members of the Iraqi Yazidi community

August 11

Text of a readout of Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's telephone conversation with President Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi of Yemen

Fact sheet: Improving and Simplifying Digital Services

August 12

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on humanitarian aid to South Sudan

August 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Text: Commitments to Action on College Opportunity

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the death of Brazilian Presidential candidate Eduardo Campos

Fact sheet: Improving College Opportunity

August 14

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the situation in Iraq

August 15

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the President's travel to Estonia

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on reports of a Russian armored military column in Ukraine

August 17

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the President's authorization of military operations in Iraq

August 19

Statement by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz on World Humanitarian Day

August 20

Statement by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco on an attempted rescue operation by U.S. military forces in Syria

August 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the entry of a Russian convoy into Ukraine

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the 25th anniversary of the Baltic Way

August 24

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the release of Peter Theo Curtis from captivity in Syria

August 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Appoints 2014–2015 Class of White House Fellows

August 26

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs joint fact sheet: DoD and VA Take New Steps To Support the Mental Health Needs of Service Members and Veterans

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces New Executive Actions To Fulfill Our Promises to Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families

August 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

August 28

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Director Jason L Furman on the second estimate of GDP for the second quarter of 2014

August 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of an on-the-record teleconference call by Senior Director for European Affairs Charles A. Kupchan and National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the President's upcoming travel to Estonia and Wales

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on Iran sanctions designations

August 30

Statement by the Press Secretary on the election of a new European Council President and High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the European Council meeting on the situation in Ukraine

September 1

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the President's authorization of military operations in Iraq

September 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's authorization of additional U.S. military personnel to protect U.S. diplomatic facilities and personnel in Iraq

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's travel to China

September 3

Statement by the Press Secretary on CVS Health Corp.'s decision to end the sale of tobacco products and initiate a smoking-cessation campaign

Fact sheet: The United States and Estonia—NATO Allies and Global Partners

Fact sheet: The United States and Lithuania—NATO Allies and Global Partners

Fact sheet: The United States and Latvia—NATO Allies and Global Partners

Fact sheet: U.S. Support and Reassurance Initiatives for the Baltics and Central Europe

September 4

Transcript of an on-the-record teleconference call by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest, Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, and U.S. Ambassador to NATO Douglas E. Lute on the President's meetings at the NATO summit

Fact sheet: Wales Summit—NATO's Changing Role in Afghanistan

September 5

Statement by the Press Secretary on the death of al-Shabaab terrorist organization leader Ahmed Abdi Godane

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Director Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in August

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the President's meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey

Fact sheet: NATO and U.S. Efforts in Support of NATO Partners, Including Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia

Transcript of a weekly address by Vice President Joe Biden (embargoed until September 6)

September 6

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's travel to Yemen

September 7

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on U.S. airstrikes around the Haditha Dam in Iraq

September 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's travel to Saudi Arabia

September 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a Corporation for National and Community Service press release: Presidents Clinton, George W. Bush, and George H.W. Bush To Join President Obama To Commemorate AmeriCorps 20th Anniversary

Fact sheet: Build America Infrastructure Investment Summit

September 10

Transcript of a background conference call by senior administration officials previewing the President's address to the Nation on U.S. strategy to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization

Fact sheet: Strategy To Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

Excerpts of the President's address to the Nation on U.S. strategy to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization

Advance text of the President's address to the Nation on U.S. strategy to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization

September 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Christian religious leaders of the Middle East

September 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces New Efforts To Expand National Service and Improve Pathways to Employment for National Service Alumni in Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of AmeriCorps

September 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a White House blog post by National Economic Council Director Jeffrey D. Zients: Growing Our Economy and Strengthening Our Financial System

Fact sheet: Growing Our Economy and Strengthening Our Financial System (prepared by the National Economic Council and the Department of the Treasury)

Fact sheet: U.S. Response to the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa (embargoed until September 16)

September 16

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a Council on Environmental Quality fact sheet: Obama Administration Partners With Private Sector on New Commitments To Slash Emissions of Potent Greenhouse Gases and Catalyze Global HFC Phase Down

Readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with South Korean National Security Office Director Kim Kwan-jin

September 17

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

September 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: White House Announces Executive Actions and Commitments From Across the Country To Advance Solar Deployment and Energy Efficiency

Fact sheet: U.S. Support for Ukraine

Fact sheet: Obama Administration Takes Actions To Combat Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria

September 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: Obama Administration Launches Second Promise Zone Competition To Create Economic Opportunity in High-Poverty Communities

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 124 and S. 231

Text of a Department of State press release: Media Note: Building International Support To Counter ISIL

Fact sheet: Launch of the "It's On Us" Public Awareness Campaign To Help Prevent Campus Sexual Assault

September 21

Statement by the Press Secretary on the signing of an agreement to form a Government of national unity in Afghanistan

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the first anniversary of the terrorist attack at the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, Kenya

September 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of remarks by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on Southeast Asia at the Brookings Institution

Fact sheet: The Equal Futures Partnership—Commitments and Progress To Expand Women's Economic and Political Participation

September 23

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Transcript of a background teleconference call by senior administration officials on U.S. airstrikes in Syria

Statement by the Press Secretary on the conviction of Uighur dissident Ilham Tohti in China

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on U.S. antipersonnel landmine policy

Fact sheet: Changes to U.S. Anti-Personnel Landmine Policy

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces New Actions To Strengthen Global Resilience to Climate Change and Launches Partnerships To Cut Carbon Pollution

Fact sheet: U.S. Support for Civil Society

September 24

Text of a readout of Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's telephone conversation with President Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi of Yemen

Fact sheet: Comprehensive U.S. Government Approach to Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Syria and the Broader Region

Fact sheet: The U.S. Global Anticorruption Agenda

Fact sheet: Announcing New U.S. Open Government Commitments on the Third Anniversary of the Open Government Partnership

Fact sheet: President Obama To Designate Largest Marine Monument in the World Off-Limits to Development

Advance text of the President's remarks to the United Nations General Assembly

September 25

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Advance text of the President's remarks at a United Nations meeting on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa

September 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a briefing by senior administration officials on the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Global Health Security Agenda Summit

Statement by the Press Secretary on the decisions by the Parliaments of the United Kingdom and Belgium to authorize the use of military force against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 120, H.R. 594, H.R. 2600, H.R. 3043, H.R. 3716, H.R. 4197, H.R. 4751, H.R. 4809, H.R. 5062, H.R. 5134, H.R. 5404, S. 276, S. 476, S. 1603, S. 2154, and S. 2258

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the third estimate of GDP for the second quarter of 2014

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the adoption of a U.N. resolution on the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons

Text of a joint statement on support for United Nations peacekeeping operations (released by the Office of the Vice President)

Text of a statement by the chair of the Global Health Security Agenda Summit

Fact sheet: Global Health Security Agenda: Getting Ahead of the Curve on Epidemic Threats

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice at the Global Health Security Agenda conference

September 27

Text of a readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with the leaders of the Syrian Opposition Coalition

September 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4323, H.R. 4980, and S.J. Res. 40

September 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: The White House Launches the "My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge"

October 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a readout of Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's meeting with Minister of Security and Justice Ivo Opstelten and National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism H.W.M. "Dick" Schoof of the Netherlands

Text of a readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi of China

October 2

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz

Text of a readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with National Security Adviser Ajit Kumar Doval of India

Text of a readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh of Vietnam

Advance text of the President's remarks at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL

October 3

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco, Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony S. Fauci, U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Rajiv J. Shah, and Gen. David M. Rodriquez, USA, commander, U.S. Africa Command, on the U.S. response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Honors Nation's Top Scientists and Innovators

Statement by the Press Secretary on the decisions by the governments of Australia, Denmark, and Turkey to authorize the use of military force against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization

Statement by the Press Secretary on the decision by the Government of the Netherlands to authorize the use of military force against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in September

Text of a readout of Deputy National Security Adviser Antony J. Blinken's meeting with Dep-

uty Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajcak of Slovakia

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on the death of Laurent DuPasquier in Ukraine

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces New Manufacturing Innovation Institute Competition

October 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4994

Fact sheet: Administration Announces New Executive Actions To Improve Quality of Care for Medicare Beneficiaries

Fact sheet: The U.S. Response to the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa

October 7

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the decision by the Government of Canada to authorize the use of military force against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization

October 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Department of Homeland Security press release: Enhanced Ebola Screening To Start at Five U.S. Airports for All People Entering U.S. From Ebola-Affected Countries

Fact sheet: Screening of Travelers at Airports (released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Homeland Security)

October 9

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: 15 Economic Facts About Millennials

Fact sheet: President Obama's Agenda for Creating Economic Opportunity for Millennials

October 10

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Announces a Presidential Emergency Board, Names Members

Text of a readout of Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's meeting with National Intelligence Organization Under Secretary Hakan Fidan of Turkey

Fact sheet: President Obama Designates San Gabriel Mountains National Monument

October 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the Chibok, Nigeria, girls held in captivity by the Boko Haram terrorist organization

Text of a readout of Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's meeting with Mayor Bill de Blasio and Police Commissioner William J. Bratton of New York City

Fact sheet: U.S. Efforts To Assist the Nigerian Government in Its Fight Against Boko Haram

October 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text: Employer Progress on Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed

Text of a joint statement by Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew and Office of Management and Budget Director Shaun L.S. Donovan on budget results for fiscal year 2014 (released by the Department of the Treasury)

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the display of the Ghazir Rug in the White House Visitor Center

Fact sheet: Getting Long-Term Unemployed Americans Back to Work

October 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on Deputy National Security Adviser Antony J. Blinken's travel to Iraq

October 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: Safeguarding Consumers' Financial Security

October 19

Transcript of a background teleconference call by senior administration officials on the aerial resupply of forces fighting the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization near Kobani, Syria

October 20

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz

October 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

October 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

October 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

October 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

October 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Presidential election in Brazil

Text of an Advanced Manufacturing Partnership 2.0 Steering Committee report: Accelerating U.S. Advanced Manufacturing (released by the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology)

Fact sheet: President Obama Announces New Actions To Further Strengthen U.S. Manufacturing Building on the Recommendations From the Final Report of the President's Advanced Manufacturing Partnership, "Accelerating U.S. Advanced Manufacturing"

October 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

October 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

October 30

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the situation in Burkina Faso

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the advance estimate of GDP for the third quarter of 2014

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the U.S.-Israel Consultative Group meeting

October 31

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Report: Women's Participation in Education and the Workforce

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: Women's Participation in Education and the Workforce

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Yukiya Amano

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes's meeting with Iraqi Yazidi leaders

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on separatist plans to hold elections in eastern Ukraine

Fact sheet: Eleven Facts About American Families and Work

November 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on elections held by separatists in eastern Ukraine

November 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

November 5

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura

Fact sheet: Emergency Funding Request To Enhance the U.S. Government's Response to Ebola at Home and Abroad

November 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes's meeting with nongovernmental organizations working to promote human rights and democracy in Burma

Text of a readout of National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice's meeting with American and Chinese advocates for human rights in China

November 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice

Transcript of a background teleconference call by senior administration officials on the administration's request for overseas contingency operations and deployment of additional U.S. military personnel to Iraq

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Supreme Court's decision to hear the case of *King* v. *Burwell*

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's intention to nominate Loretta E. Lynch to be Attorney General

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in October

Text of a statement by Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Adm. John Kirby on the President's authorization to deploy additional U.S. military personnel to Iraq (released by the Department of Defense)

Text of a readout of the President's meeting with congressional leaders

Statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the nomination of Antony J. Blinken to be Deputy Secretary of State

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the formation of a new Government in Yemen

November 9

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the situation in eastern Ukraine

November 10

Transcript of a press gaggle by a senior administration official on Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper, Jr.'s travel to North Korea

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Names Recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom

Fact sheet: The U.S.-Australia Alliance

Fact sheet: Supporting American Job Growth and Strengthening Ties by Extending U.S./China Visa Validity for Tourists, Business Travelers, and Students

Fact sheet: The Obama Administration Continues Its Commitment to Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families

November 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest, Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, and U.S. Trade Representative Michael B. Froman

Fact sheet: Supporting Economic Growth at Home and Abroad by Eliminating Trade Barriers on Information Technology Products

Fact sheet: 22nd Annual APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting

Fact sheet: APEC Efforts To Support Emergency and Disaster Preparedness, Recovery, and Resilience

Fact sheet: APEC Leaders Commit To Protect the Environment

Fact sheet: Key Infrastructure Initiatives Supporting U.S. Economic Priorities Work in the G20 and APEC

Fact sheet: APEC Breaks Down Barriers to Women's Economic Participation

Fact sheet: Promoting Energy Security and Clean, Efficient, and Sustainable Energy Development in the APEC Region

Fact sheet: Fulfilling Leaders' Instructions on Quality in Higher Education

Fact sheet: APEC Leaders Agree on Actions To Promote Regional Economic Integration and Trade

Fact sheet: Leading the Fight Against Corruption and Bribery

Fact sheet: U.S.-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change and Clean Energy Cooperation

November 12

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the U.S. presentation to the United Nations Committee against Torture

Fact sheet: President Obama's Visit to China

Fact sheet: U.S.-China Economic Relations

November 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Statement by the Press Secretary on the agreement between the U.S. and India on the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation

Statement by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes on the opening of a U.S. Peace Corps program in Burma

Fact sheet: 2nd ASEAN-U.S. Summit

Fact sheet: U.S. Assistance to Burma

November 14

Fact sheet: New Initiative To Improve Labor Rights in Burma

Fact sheet: The President's Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative

Fact sheet: Promoting Prosperity, Security, and Good Governance in Central America

November 15

Fact sheet: United States Support for Global Efforts To Combat Carbon Pollution and Build Resilience

November 16

Text of a joint media release: Australia-Japan-United States Trilateral Leaders Meeting

Fact sheet: The G–20 Brisbane Summit

November 17

Statement by the Press Secretary on the death of Martin Salia

November 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

November 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 1086

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the President's meeting with Minister of the National Guard Prince Mitib bin Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia

Fact sheet: ConnectED to the Future

November 20

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Presents the National Medals of Science and National Medals of Technology and Innovation

Fact sheet: Global Entrepreneurship Summit

Fact sheet: Immigration Accountability Executive Action

November 21

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz

Statement by the Press Secretary on Holodomor Remembrance Day

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Presidential Determination Pursuant to Section 1245(d)(4)(B) and (C) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: The Economic Effects of Administrative Action on Immigration

Fact sheet: The Economic Benefits of Fixing Our Broken Immigration System

November 22

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the terrorist attack in Mandera, Kenya

November 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

November 25

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz and Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the second estimate of GDP for the third quarter of 2014

November 26

Statement by the Press Secretary: Background on the Pardoning of the National Thanksgiving Turkey

Statement by the Press Secretary on clinical trial results of a potential Ebola vaccine

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1233, H.R. 4194, S. 885, S. 898, S. 1093, S. 1499, S. 1512, S. 1934, S. 2141, S. 2539, and S. 2583

Text of a readout of Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco's telephone conversation with President Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi of Yemen

November 29

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Government of Afghanistan's approval of the Afghanistan-U.S. bilateral security agreement and the NATO status of forces agreement

December 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

White House report: Review: Federal Support for Local Law Enforcement Equipment Acquisition

Fact sheet: Strengthening Community Policing

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice at the White House World AIDS Day observance

December 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the terrorist attacks in Kenya

White House report: 2014 Native Youth Report (embargoed until December 3)

Fact sheet: Update on the Ebola Response

Fact sheet: The White House Tribal Nations Conference (embargoed until December 3)

December 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the fifth anniversary of Alan Gross's imprisonment in Cuba

Fact sheet: 16 U.S. Communities Recognized as Climate Action Champions for Leadership on Climate Change

Fact sheet: Lifting America's Game in Climate Education, Literacy, and Training (released by the Office of Science and Technology Policy)

December 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: The President and First Lady's Call to Action on College Opportunity

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 129, H.R. 4067, H.R. 5441, and H.R. 5728

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on human rights in The Gambia

White House report: Commitments to Action on College Opportunity

White House report: College Opportunity Commitments to Action: Progress Report

December 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the employment situation in November

December 6

Statement by Physician to the President and White House Medical Unit Director Ronny L. Jackson on the President's throat examination

December 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: New Commitments To Support Computer Science Education

December 9

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a background teleconference briefing by senior administration officials on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence study of the Central Intelligence Agency's detention and interrogation program

Text of a Department of Transportation report: Be TireWise: Save Money at the Pump, Increase Efficiency, and Protect Your Safety

Fact sheet: Increasing Safety and Efficiency While Saving Money at the Pump

December 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: The Economics of Early Childhood Investments

Text: Playbook for Becoming an Early Learning Community

Fact sheet: Invest in US: The White House Summit on Early Childhood Education

December 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Fact sheet: President Obama Launches Competitions for New Manufacturing Innovation Hubs and American Apprenticeship Grants

December 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 130

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Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 131

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Statement by the Press Secretary on parliamentary elections in Japan

December 15

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

December 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest and Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Protects Alaska's Bristol Bay From Future Oil and Gas Drilling

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 105, H.R. 43, H.R. 78, H.R. 451, H.R. 1391, H.R. 1707, H.R. 2112, H.R. 2203, H.R. 2223, H.R. 2366, H.R. 2678, H.R. 3085, H.R. 3375, H.R. 3534, H.R. 3682, H.R. 3957, H.R. 4189, H.R. 4443, H.R. 4812, H.R. 4919, H.R. 4924, H.R. 4939, H.R. 5030, H.R. 5106, H.R. 5108, H.R. 5681, S. 229, S. 1434, S. 2040, S. 2917, and S. 2921

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 83

Text of a White House blog post by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman: The Economy in 2014

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: The Economy in 2014

December 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a background teleconference call by senior administration officials on changes to U.S. policy toward Cuba and the release of Alan P. Gross

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Grants Commutations and Pardons

Text of a statement by Secretary of State John F. Kerry on the President's changes to U.S. policy toward Cuba (released by the Department of State)

Text of a communiqué from Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin of the Holy See (Vatican City) on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba (released by the Holy See Press Office)

Text of a statement by Secretary of Commerce Penny S. Pritzker on the President's changes to U.S. policy toward Cuba (released by the Department of Commerce)

Text of a statement by Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew on the President's changes to U.S. policy toward Cuba (released by the Department of the Treasury)

Text of a statement by Office of the Director of National Intelligence Public Affairs Director Brian P. Hale: Statement on the Release of a Cuban Individual (released by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence)

Text of a statement by Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack on the President's changes to U.S. policy toward Cuba (released by the Department of Agriculture)

Fact sheet: Charting a New Course on Cuba

December 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: Year in Review: Creating Economic Opportunity for All Americans in 2014

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 669, H.R. 1067, H.R. 1204, H.R. 1206, H.R. 1281, H.R. 1378, H.R. 1447, H.R. 2591, H.R. 2640, H.R. 2719, H.R. 2952, H.R. 3027, H.R. 3044, H.R. 3096, H.R. 3329, H.R. 3374, H.R. 3468, H.R. 3572, H.R. 4007, H.R. 4193, H.R. 4199, H.R. 4276, H.R. 4416, H.R. 4651, H.R. 4771, H.R. 4926, H.R. 5050, H.R. 5057, H.R. 5069, H.R. 5185, H.R. 5331, H.R. 5562, H.R. 5687, H.R. 5705, H.R. 5739, H.R. 5816, H.R. 5859, S. 1000, S. 1353, S. 1474, S. 1683, S. 1691, S. 2142, S. 2270, S. 2338, S. 2444, S. 2519, S. 2521, S. 2651, S. 2759, and S. 3008

Text of a statement by National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice on the appointment of Avril D. Haines as Deputy National Security Adviser

Fact sheet: Task Force on 21st Century Policing

December 19

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1068, H.R. 2754, H.R. 2901, H.R. 3608, H.R. 3979, H.R. 4030, H.R. 4681, H.R. 5462, H.R. 5771, and S. 2673

Statement by National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan on the 25th anniversary of the fall of communism in Romania

December 22

Statement by the Press Secretary: Year of Action: A Final Progress Report on the Obama Administration's Actions To Help Create Opportunity for All Americans

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Presidential election in Tunisia

Text of a White House report: Year of Action: A Final Progress Report on the Obama Administration's Actions To Help Create Opportunity for All Americans

December 23

Statement by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruling regarding the President's executive actions on immigration

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Jason L. Furman on the third estimate of GDP for the third quarter of 2014

Text of a Council of Economic Advisers report: The Economy in 2014

December 30

Statement by the Press Secretary on the crash of AirAsia Flight 8501

Appendix D—Presidential Documents Published in the *Federal Register*

This appendix lists Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the Federal Register. *The texts of the documents are printed in the* Federal Register (F.R.) *at the citations listed below. The documents are also printed in title 3 of the* Code of Federal Regulations *and in the Compilation of Presidential Documents.*

PROCLAMATIONS

Proc. No.	*Date 2014*	*Subject*	*79 F.R. Page*
9147	July 18	Captive Nations Week, 2014	42969
9148	July 25	Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 2014	44251
9149	July 25	Minority Enterprise Development Week, 2014	44253
9150	July 25	National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, 2014	44255
9151	July 25	World Hepatitis Day, 2014	44257
9152	Aug. 8	National Health Center Week, 2014	47549
9153	Aug. 25	Women's Equality Day, 2014	51885
9154	Aug. 29	National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, 2014	52937
9155	Aug. 29	National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, 2014	52939
9156	Aug. 29	National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, 2014	52941
9157	Aug. 29	National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, 2014	52943
9158	Aug. 29	National Preparedness Month, 2014	52945
9159	Aug. 29	National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, 2014	52947
9160	Aug. 29	National Wilderness Month, 2014	52949
9161	Aug. 29	Labor Day, 2014	52951
9162	Sept. 4	National Days of Prayer and Remembrance, 2014	53599
9163	Sept. 5	National Grandparents Day, 2014	54181
9164	Sept. 9	Twentieth Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act	54885
9165	Sept. 10	Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance, 2014	54887
9166	Sept. 12	National Hispanic Heritage Month, 2014	55959
9167	Sept. 12	National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week, 2014	55961
9168	Sept. 16	Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, Constitution Week, 2014	56473
9169	Sept. 18	National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 2014	56929
9170	Sept. 19	National Farm Safety and Health Week, 2014	56937
9171	Sept. 19	National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week, 2014	57425
9172	Sept. 19	National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, 2014	57427

PROCLAMATIONS (Continued)

Proc. No.	*Date 2014*	*Subject*	*79 F.R. Page*
9173	Sept. 25	Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument Expansion	58645
9174	Sept. 26	National Hunting and Fishing Day, 2014	59417
9175	Sept. 26	National Public Lands Day, 2014	59419
9176	Sept. 26	Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, 2014	59421
9177	Sept. 30	National Arts and Humanities Month, 2014	60043
9178	Sept. 30	National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, 2014	60045
9179	Sept. 30	National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, 2014	60047
9180	Sept. 30	National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 2014	60049
9181	Sept. 30	National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, 2014	60051
9182	Sept. 30	National Energy Action Month, 2014	60053
9183	Sept. 30	National Substance Abuse Prevention Month, 2014	60055
9184	Oct. 2	National Manufacturing Day, 2014	60737
9185	Oct. 3	Fire Prevention Week, 2014	60939
9186	Oct. 3	Child Health Day, 2014	60941
9187	Oct. 3	German-American Day, 2014	60943
9188	Oct. 3	To Modify the List of Beneficiary Developing Countries Under the Trade Act of 1974	60945
9189	Oct. 8	Leif Erikson Day, 2014	61759
9190	Oct. 10	National School Lunch Week, 2014	62295
9191	Oct. 10	International Day of the Girl, 2014	62297
9192	Oct. 10	General Pulaski Memorial Day, 2014	62299
9193	Oct. 10	Columbus Day, 2014	62301
9194	Oct. 10	Establishment of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument	62303
9195	Oct. 14	Blind Americans Equality Day, 2014	62551
9196	Oct. 17	National Character Counts Week, 2014	63289
9197	Oct. 17	National Forest Products Week, 2014	63291
9198	Oct. 23	United Nations Day, 2014	64293, 72539
9199	Oct. 31	Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Month, 2014	65855
9200	Oct. 31	Military Family Month, 2014	65857
9201	Oct. 31	National Adoption Month, 2014	65859
9202	Oct. 31	National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, 2014	65861
9203	Oct. 31	National College Application Month, 2014	65863
9204	Oct. 31	National Diabetes Month, 2014	65865
9205	Oct. 31	National Entrepreneurship Month, 2014	65867
9206	Oct. 31	National Family Caregivers Month, 2014	65869
9207	Oct. 31	National Native American Heritage Month, 2014	65871

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Proc. No.	*Date 2014*	*Subject*	*79 F.R. Page*
9208	Nov. 7	Veterans Day, 2014	67309
9209	Nov. 7	World Freedom Day, 2014	67311
9210	Nov. 14	American Education Week, 2014	68759
9211	Nov. 14	America Recycles Day, 2014	68761
9212	Nov. 19	National Child's Day, 2014	69757
9213	Nov. 21	National Family Week, 2014	70763
9214	Nov. 26	Thanksgiving Day, 2014	71621
9215	Nov. 28	National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, 2014	71951, 72541
9216	Nov. 28	World AIDS Day, 2014	71953, 72543
9217	Dec. 2	International Day of Persons With Disabilities, 2014	72537
9218	Dec. 5	National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 2014	73799
9219	Dec. 9	Human Rights Day and Human Rights Week, 2014	74013
9220	Dec. 12	Bill of Rights Day, 2014	75415
9221	Dec. 15	70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge	75733
9222	Dec. 16	Wright Brothers Day, 2014	76225
9223	Dec. 23	To Take Certain Actions Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act and for Other Purposes	78681

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9224	Dec. 31	National Mentoring Month, 2015	823
9225	Dec. 31	National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, 2015	825
9226	Dec. 31	National Stalking Awareness Month, 2015	827

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

E.O. No.	*Date 2014*	*Subject*	*79 F.R. Page*
13671	July 8	Taking Additional Steps To Address the National Emergency With Respect to the Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	39949
13672	July 21	Further Amendments to Executive Order 11478, Equal Employment Opportunity in the Federal Government, and Executive Order 11246, Equal Employment Opportunity	42971
13673	July 31	Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces	45309
13674	July 31	Revised List of Quarantinable Communicable Diseases	45671
13675	Aug. 5	Establishing the President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa	46661
13676	Sept. 18	Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria	56931
13677	Sept. 23	Climate-Resilient International Development	58231
13678	Oct. 3	Conversion Authority for Criminal Investigators (Special Agents) of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives	60946
13679	Oct. 10	Establishing an Emergency Board To Investigate a Dispute Between the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority and Its Locomotive Engineers Represented by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen	62323
13680	Oct. 16	Ordering the Selected Reserve and Certain Individual Ready Reserve Members of the Armed Forces to Active Duty	63287
13681	Oct. 17	Improving the Security of Consumer Financial Transactions	63491
13682	Dec. 5	Closing of Executive Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government on Friday, December 26, 2014	73459
13683	Dec. 11	Amendments to Executive Orders 11030, 13653, and 13673	75041
13684	Dec. 18	Establishment of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing	76865
13685	Dec. 19	Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting Certain Transactions With Respect to the Crimea Region of Ukraine	77357
13686	Dec. 19	Adjustments of Certain Rates of Pay	77361

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	July 11	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority Pursuant to Section 4 of the Support for United States-Republic of Korea Civil Nuclear Cooperation Act	43917
	July 15	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Former Liberian Regime of Charles Taylor	41875
	July 18	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations	42645
	July 29	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Lebanon	44259
	Aug. 7	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Export Control Regulations	46959
2014–12	Aug. 7	Presidential Determination: Continuation of U.S. Drug Interdiction Assistance to the Government of Colombia	49221
2014–13	Aug. 11	Presidential Determination: Drawdown Under Section 506(a)(1) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 for France To Support Its Counterterrorism Efforts in Mali, Niger, and Chad	49223
	Sept. 4	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Certain Terrorist Attacks	53279
2014–14	Sept. 5	Presidential Determination: Continuation of the Exercise of Certain Authorities Under the Trading With the Enemy Act	54183
	Sept. 10	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority Under Section 506(a)(1) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961	56623
2014–15	Sept. 15	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination on Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2015	56625
	Sept. 17	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, or Support Terrorism	56475
2014–16	Sept. 18	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination With Respect to Foreign Governments' Efforts Regarding Trafficking in Persons	57699
	Sept. 23	Memorandum: Deepening U.S. Government Efforts To Collaborate With and Strengthen Civil Society	58237
	Sept. 24	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority Under Sections 506(a)(1) and 552(c)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961	60041

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	Sept. 26	Memorandum: Certification Concerning U.S. Participation in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic Consistent With Section 2005 of the American Servicemembers' Protection Act	69749
	Sept. 30	Memorandum: Delegation of Authority Under Section 614 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961	69751
2014–17	Sept. 30	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2015	69753
2014–18	Sept. 30	Presidential Determination: Determination With Respect to the Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008	69755
2015–1	Oct. 9	Presidential Determination: Provision of U.S. Drug Interdiction Assistance to the Government of Brazil	62793
	Oct. 16	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia	62795
	Oct. 17	Memorandum: Providing an Order of Succession Within the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service	63803
	Oct. 17	Memorandum: Providing an Order of Succession Within the Social Security Administration	63805
	Oct. 21	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Situation in or in Relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo	63495
	Oct. 24	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan	64295
	Nov. 7	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction	67035
	Nov. 12	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran	68091
	Nov. 13	Memorandum: Authorizing the Exercise of Authority Under Public Law 85–804	68757
	Nov. 21	Memorandum: Creating Welcoming Communities and Fully Integrating Immigrants and Refugees	70765
	Nov. 21	Memorandum: Modernizing and Streamlining the U.S. Immigrant Visa System for the 21st Century	70769
2015–2	Nov. 21	Presidential Determination Pursuant to Section 1245(d)(4)(B) and (C) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012	71619
2015–3	Dec. 3	Presidential Determination: Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act	74009

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